



MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

An Illustrated
Encyclopedia
of Mythology, Religion
and the Unknown

ACPL ITEM
DISCARDED

133.03

M31

1995

v. 3





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017

<https://archive.org/details/manmythmagicillu03cave>

WAY

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

3 1833 02692 4883

133.03 M31 1995 v. 3

Man, myth & magic

SEP 21 1995

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA 46802

You may return this book to any location of
the Allen County Public Library.

DEMCO

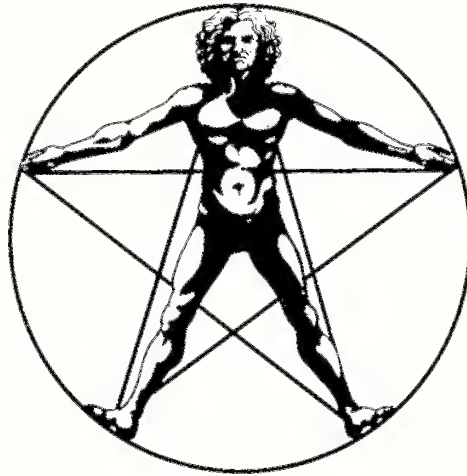
MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

VOLUME 3

Budd-Colo



MAN, MYTH & MAGIC



The Illustrated Encyclopedia
of Mythology, Religion
and the Unknown

Editor-in-Chief

Richard Cavendish

Editorial Board

C. A. Burland; Professor Glyn Daniel;
Professor E. R. Dodds; Professor Mircea Eliade;
William Sargant; John Symonds;
Professor R. J. Zwi Werblowsky;
Professor R. C. Zaehner.

New Edition edited and compiled by

Richard Cavendish and Brian Innes

MARSHALL CAVENDISH
NEW YORK, LONDON, TORONTO, SYDNEY

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor-in-Chief Richard Cavendish

Editorial Board C. A. Burland
Glyn Daniel
E. R. Dodds
Mircea Eliade
William Sargent
John Symonds
R. J. Zwi Werblowsky
R. C. Zaehner

Allen County Public Library
900 Webster Street
PO Box 2270
Fort Wayne, IN 46801-2270

Special Consultants Rev. S. G. F. Brandon
Katherine M. Briggs
William Gaunt
Francis Huxley
John Lehmann

Deputy Editor Isabel Sutherland

Assistant Editors Frank Smyth
Malcolm Saunders
Tessa Clark
Julie Thompson
Polly Patullo

Art Director Brian Innes
Art Editor Valerie Kirkpatrick
Design Assistant Andrzej Bielecki
Picture Editors John McKenzie
Ann Horton

REVISED 1985

Executive Editor Yvonne Deutch
Editorial Consultant Paul G. Davis
Editors Emma Fisher
Mary Lambert
Sarah Litvinoff

REVISED 1995

Editors Richard Cavendish
Brian Innes
Assistant Editor Amanda Harman

Frontispiece: The very embodiment of black magic: in medieval times a black cat was believed to be the diabolical familiar of witches (Michael Busselle)

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Man, myth and magic: the illustrated encyclopedia of mythology, religion and the unknown / editor in chief, Richard Cavendish

Rev. ed. of Man, myth & magic.
Includes bibliographical references and index
ISBN 1-85435-731-X (set)
1. Occultism – Encyclopedias. 2. Mythology – Encyclopedias. 3. Religion – Encyclopedias.
I. Cavendish, Richard. II. Man, myth & magic.
BF 1407.M34 1994
133'.03 – dc20

94-10784
CIP

Published by Marshall Cavendish Corporation
2415 Jerusalem Avenue
North Bellmore, New York 11710

© Marshall Cavendish Corporation 1995
© Marshall Cavendish Ltd 1983, 1985
© B. P. C. Publishing Limited 1970

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from the copyright holders.

Printed and Bound in Italy by L. E. G. O. S.p.a. Vicenza.

CONTENTS Volume 3

Buddhism	295	Celts	372
Buffalo	303	Centaur	379
Builders' Rites	303	Ceres	379
Bull	305	Ceylon	379
Burial	310	Chakras	380
Burning	318	Chaldeans	383
Bushmen	318	Changeling	383
Butterfly	320	Channelling	384
Buzzard	320	Charon	385
Cabala	321	Charm	385
Cactus	328	Cherub	385
Caduceus	328	Chi	386
Cagliostro	328	Children's Games	387
Calumet	329	Chimera	390
Camelot	330	China	392
Camisards	337	Chinese Astrology	401
Cancer	338	Christianity	403
Candle	339	Christian Science	414
Cannibalism	341	Christmas	418
Canonization	341	Circe	422
Capricorn	341	Circle	422
Cards	342	Clairvoyance	424
Cargo Cults	348	Cloud of Unknowing	425
Carole	351	Clover	425
Caste	353	Coal	425
Cat	355	Cock	426
Cathars	358	Cockleshell	427
St Catherine	361	Cockroach	427
Cauldron	363	Cokelers	427
Cave Art	364	Coleridge	428
Caves	370	Collective Unconscious	429
Edgar Cayce	371	Colours	430





BUDDHISM



Born in India some 2,500 years ago, Buddhism died out in its native land, but established itself as a major religion in China and Japan, in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, and in Tibet. In all these areas it has played a profoundly important part in Eastern culture and the lives of millions over many centuries. More recently, Buddhism has returned to India and has made some impact on the West

BUDDHISM is the fourth of the major religions of the world in the number of its adherents, ranking after Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Reliable figures are not existent, but at a rough estimate there is perhaps one Buddhist in the world for every four Christians and two Muslims.

Like all the major religions, Buddhism operates on two different levels. On one level, Buddhism is a philosophical system whose appeal is to intellectuals, to educated and sophisticated people drawn by its subtle paradoxes, and to athletes of the spirit. On a lower level Buddhism is the religion of ordinary people, who care little for philosophy and who worship Buddhist deities in the hope of obtaining the good things of this life and happiness in a heaven after death.

Buddhism originated in India and for its first 1500 years it developed there alongside Hinduism, with which it inevitably has much in common. Both religions are generally more peaceable and tolerant of dissent within their own systems than Christianity and Islam. This is partly because the beliefs of both Buddhism and Hinduism do not

suggest that human beings live on the earth only once, and so have only a single opportunity to get things spiritually right. In these Indian religions, human beings are believed to live many times over. Bound to the 'sorrowful weary wheel' of existence by karma, the principle of requital for good deeds and bad (see KARMA), we are born and die and are reborn again in an endless succession of earthly lives, unless we can find a means of escape. It is the way of escape which the higher level of Buddhism offers.

Unlike Hinduism, however, Buddhism has its origin in the teachings of a single man. Over 25 centuries a huge mass of myths, legends and traditions has gathered about him and there is now no hope of isolating the historical truth from the accumulated fiction, but even today no one seriously doubts that the founder of Buddhism was a real person.

The Buddha

He is known as the Buddha, which is a title meaning 'enlightened one' or 'awakened one', not a personal name. His name was Siddhartha Gautama and he was born about 563 BC, the son of a royal house among the Sakya people (hence he is also known as Sakyamuni, 'the Sakya Sage'), at Kapilavastu in the foothills of the Himalayas in what is now Nepal. According to later mythology, this very special personage was both immaculately conceived and immaculately born, without sex or pain. His mother dreamed that a white elephant entered her womb through her side,

Previous page Buddha, 'the enlightened one', is the title of Siddhartha Gautama, founder of this family of religions and philosophies whose essential aim is to liberate all things from the endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth, the prison in which Indian thought sees man enchained: from Katmandu in Nepal
Buddhism grew up originally in India, though few traces of it remained there after c 1200 AD, but it still has a powerful influence in the Far East. The temple of the Emerald Buddha at Bangkok, Thailand (left) is one of the great shrines in Southeast Asia. Buddhists believe in many demons and spirits, like this guardian spirit (right) in the same temple

and presently she gave birth to the future Buddha standing by a tree in a garden, where he emerged painlessly from her right side. She died seven days later.

Siddhartha grew up in luxury as a royal prince and was trained as a warrior, but in time his eyes were opened to the realities of life when he observed the miseries of old age, disease and death. When he was 29 he left home, abandoning his wife and baby son, and went wandering in search of spiritual truth. For several years he was an ascetic, practising austerities which reduced him almost to a skeleton, but he concluded that this was not the answer. Through meditation and contemplation he eventually achieved enlightenment beneath a fig tree, later to be famous as the Bo-Tree or Bodhi-Tree (the Tree of Awakening), at Buddh Gaya in the state of Bihar. This afterwards became a great place of

Reverence for Life

Buddhists, as is well known, regard the difference between human beings and animals as unimportant, and equal compassion should, in any case, be extended to all. Scrupulous respect for the life and dignity, for the rights and wishes, of all living beings is a Bodhisattva's first and most elementary duty.

During a debate with the Saskya Pandita which the Venerable Tsong-kha-pa had in about 1400 AD his opponent, probably absent-mindedly, crushed a louse between his nails. Tsong-kha-pa interrupted him, exclaiming, 'While we are here debating these abstruse metaphysical subtleties,

I hear the laments of a fellow-creature rising to the sky!' The Saskya Pandita was so much taken aback by this reproof that his hat fell off, he left the tent in confusion, and victory remained with Tsong-kha-pa and his 'Yellow Church'.

Likewise, it is quite usual for Bodhisattvas to sacrifice their own lives for animals. When he was a prince of Benares, the Bodhisattva who subsequently became the Buddha Gautama threw himself down in front of a tigress who had given birth to five cubs and was exhausted from hunger and thirst. 'But she did nothing to him. The Bodhisattva noticed that she was too weak to move. As a merciful man he had taken no sword with him. He therefore cut his throat with a sharp piece of bamboo and fell down near the

tigress. She noticed his body all covered with blood, and in no time ate up all the flesh and blood, leaving only the bones.'

On another celebrated occasion, as King Sibi, the Bodhisattva, ransomed a pigeon by giving a pound of his own flesh to the hawk who had caught it. This fellow-feeling for all living beings, whoever they may be, is much akin to Dr Schweitzer's 'reverence for life'... Even the bacteria had already been thought of by the Buddhist monks, who took special precautions against harming the invisible creatures who were said to abound in water and in the air.

E. Conze 'Buddhism: the Mahayana'
in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths*

Buddhist pilgrimage and now has a splendid temple and many Buddhist relics.

The Buddha could now have vanished from the world we know, and was tempted to do so, but because of his infinite compassion for all living creatures he remained in the world. He spent the rest of his life moving about the central Ganges area, teaching and making converts, and in legend working all sorts of miracles and wonders. He died at the age of 80, in about 483 BC, surrounded by sorrowing followers at Kusinagara (now Kasia), some 60 miles from his birthplace.

The Three Baskets

The Buddha wrote no books, and there is no Buddhist equivalent of the Bible or the Koran. Gautama taught by word of mouth, preaching and discussing. Those who heard him remembered what he said and passed it on to others, who taught it to others in their turn, and so it was handed down for many generations. Although great care was taken to transmit the words accurately, the teachings were not written down until about 400 years after Gautama's death. What is known of his doctrines, consequently, goes back to early Buddhist tradition, not directly to the Buddha himself. The earliest documents were written down in Sri Lanka in Pali, an Indo-Aryan language (now extinct, it died out in the 18th century), related to Sanskrit. The Pali canon of early Buddhist teaching, called the *Tipitaka* ('three baskets'), is accepted as authoritative in Sri Lanka and the South-east Asian countries.

Other Buddhist writers elaborated on the early material and as Buddhism spread out into many different traditions, schools and sects, the quantity of Buddhist sacred writings grew to colossal proportions – hundreds of thousands of words in thousands of volumes in numerous languages. They range from Sutras (discourses), supposedly spoken originally by the Buddha himself or his disciples, to commentaries, and commentaries upon commentaries, written centuries later.

Though it has so many of them, the Buddhist tradition has less regard for books than for the influence of a personal teacher. The Buddha himself, apparently, never demanded that his teaching should be taken on trust, and the scriptures are not

regarded as authoritative and binding upon the Buddhist, who must find the truth for himself. 'Look within,' says a Tibetan work with a typically paradoxical title, *The Voice of the Silence*, 'thou art Buddha.' On the other hand, Buddhists are not in doubt that there is only one true Way, and the aspirant must find it. 'Buddhas point out the way,' says the Pali *Dhammapada*, 'it is for you to swelter at the task.'

The Middle Way

Buddhist philosophy is subtle and paradoxical, and grows out of an intellectual tradition unfamiliar to the West. The texts are studded with technical terms which resist translation and inevitably form a barrier for Westerners. The Buddha's teachings are known as the Dharma, an untranslatable word which combines connotations of 'truth', 'law', 'doctrine' and 'what is as it should be'.

The Buddha, according to the early tradition, proclaimed a Middle Way between the extremes of futile self-indulgence on the one side and futile self-denial on the other. He taught the Four Noble Truths: that life is fraught with suffering and disappointment; that this is the consequence of our desire to enjoy power and sensual pleasure and to cling on to life; that the way to end suffering and disappointment is to cease to crave; and that the way to cease to crave is the path of the Dharma.

The Middle Way's foundation in practice is Buddhism's moral code. The minimal basic requirements are not to kill or harm living things, not to steal, not to engage in illicit sex, not to lie and not to use alcohol and drugs. This is the code for the ordinary believer, but a much more austere regime is imposed upon Buddhist monks, who are required to live in strict poverty, chastity and harmlessness. Unless the moral rules are followed, no spiritual advance can be made. Living by the rules creates good karma, which leads to a rebirth higher up the ladder in one's next existence, but there is a far more fundamental purpose. The moral code loosens the shackles of craving and self-centredness, which are what keep us bound to 'the long, long faring on' of our endless succession of lives.

Though it has often been observed that Buddhism is generally a cheerful and good-humoured system in practice, it regards life

on earth with a profoundly pessimistic eye. Life is full of evil and suffering, and even the apparently good things in life do not last. Nothing remains the same and even what we deludedly regard as pleasures all pass away. We live in a state of continual flux, and consequently we live in a condition of continual uncertainty and unease.

The Escape from the Wheel

The 'craving' which the early Buddhist tradition identified as a spiritual disease of human kind does not refer only to desire for money and material comfort, for sex, food and drink and physical satisfactions. It goes far beyond this to include the desire for love and affection, the need for family, children and friends, the creative impulse and aesthetic pleasure (which in practice did not prevent Buddhists from creating beautiful art and architecture), and the longing for success or fame. The whole world of needs, ties and ambitions in which human beings exist is denounced as an entanglement in suffering, impermanence and anxiety, and so the whole world must be renounced in order to escape.

Not content with this drastic rejection of what people always hold dear, early Buddhist tradition went on to deny most people's ordinary, common-sense belief that at the centre of each human being there is a separate individual identity, a personality, a soul, an 'I' (the *atman* in Hinduism). Words like 'I' and 'mine' are meaningless, according to Buddhist theory, because they do not correspond to any reality. Each of us is merely a temporary combination of a body and a consciousness with continually changing physical and mental states. Five minutes from now I shall not be the same person as I am this minute, so how can I pretend to have any lasting identity? The delusion that each of us has a distinct identity, that each of us is a real person, keeps us wanting to live and wanting to be happier, and so keeps us imprisoned in the unending cycle of repeated lives.

There is a fundamental and startling paradox here, of course, because Buddhist philosophy accepts the belief that human beings live many lives. If no soul or personality or 'I' exists, what is it that dies and is reborn? The Buddhist reply is that what passes on from one life to another is something as insubstantial as a flame that

You become a Buddhist by saying, 'I go to the Buddha-refuge, I go to the Dharma-refuge, I go to the Sangha-refuge': the Dharma being the true doctrine and the Sangha the community of holy persons, including monks and laymen. The monks vow to observe a code of more than 200 moral rules but the five basic rules, applying to laymen as well as monks, are not to take human or animal life, not to take what is not given, not to engage in sexual misconduct, not to tell lies, and not to drink intoxicants

Right A young boy, regally dressed, sits with the women of his family before taking the vows which will make him a Buddhist monk

Facing page The boy's head is shaved (above). This is a mark of the renunciation of the worldly life in many different societies: Christian monks, for instance, have 'tonsures' or shaved patches on their heads. Later (below) the boy takes the saffron-yellow robe of a monk and vows to keep it holy as long as he breathes

passes from one candle to another, which is nevertheless subject to karma and bears the marks of its actions in previous lives.

The path to salvation lies through meditation on the real nature of things, which leads to the extinction of craving and the dissolution of personal individuality. By extinguishing the ability to want anything, by escaping from all attachment to the world and anything in it, by abandoning the delusion of personal identity, the Buddhist ideal of perfect serenity is achieved. Suffering, anxiety and impermanence cease. Karma has nothing on which to operate, and the weary procession of reincarnations comes to an end, to be succeeded by an ideal, eternal state which is called nirvana, 'coolness' or 'blowing out' like an extinguished flame.

The Cool Cave

No clear description of nirvana can be given, for it is outside human experience. It is no good asking if someone who attains it has survived death or not, or asking anything else about it for that matter. Nirvana has been likened to coolness after a fever and Buddhists have called it the cool cave, the harbour of refuge, the holy city or the further shore, without suggesting that these are adequate images. It is often described in negative terms, as something 'unborn, unbecome, unmade, unconditioned'. It is a paradoxical condition of contented non-existence (see also NIRVANA).

Various stages of advance towards the goal are recognised in early Buddhist teaching. The 'stream-winner' has made sufficient progress to be sure of a fortunate rebirth in the next life and of the ultimate enlightenment after no more than seven more earthly lives. The 'once-returner' has gone so far as to need only one more earthly reincarnation. The 'non-returner' will not come back to the earth, but will be reborn in one of the heavens and there attain nirvana. The *arhat*, or saint, attains nirvana in this life and will not be reborn at all.

Meditation, which is the key to progress on the Way, cannot be learned from books, but only from a personal teacher. Mental and spiritual exercises are prescribed, with much in common with those of yoga (see



YOGA). Meditation inculcates the right mental attitude and it leads on beyond thinking and concentration to experiences in which the meditator is believed to escape from the physical body and acquire supernatural powers, including the ability to fly, to change shape, to walk on water, to read minds, to see and hear things far away, to remember former lives. A succession of trance states leads eventually to the final 'enlightenment' or 'awakening', and with it entry to nirvana.

There is nothing here about God or gods. The Buddha evidently did not accept the prevailing Vedic religion of his time, with its gods and goddesses, its priests and sacrifices. Either he did not believe in the gods or he did not regard them as mattering. The Middle Way does not involve belief in gods of any kind, or believing in the Buddha as divine, and its path to salvation involves human effort alone and has nothing to do with gods. It has consequently been questioned whether high register Buddhism can properly be classified as a religion at all. Popular Buddhism as it developed, however, certainly has gods.

The Community of Monks

The Buddha was clearly a personality of formidable spiritual force and his teaching, difficult as it was, fell on fertile ground. The local rajahs were strong supporters, but male and female followers were welcomed from every caste and rank. The more enthusiastic and determined of them joined the order of monks which the Buddha founded

(and there were communities of nuns as well in the early days). He named no successor and left the future of the movement to the monks.

The first monks did not live in monasteries, but wandered about in small groups, depending on begging for their food. This was not practical in the rainy season, when they would find a place to which to retreat together. Sympathisers began to provide places of retreat and settled monasteries developed, some of which were in caves in the early days.

Buddhist monks, or 'sharers' (*bhikkhus*), leave their homes, families and possessions behind to share the life of a community in which the individual monk owns nothing or next to nothing. They pore over the sacred texts and commentaries, and spend much time in meditation. Their monasteries, their food, their yellow robes and other simple necessities are provided by the laity, who in this way earn good karma for the future. The monks reciprocate by providing the laity with spiritual and social services. They officiate at rites and festivals, they teach the local children in the monastery school and they frequently take the lead in local affairs.

A monk is not tied to his monastery. He can leave it and return to lay life whenever he chooses. To keep the peace within a monastery, it is accepted practice for any seriously disaffected group of monks to leave and set up a new community of their own, a safety valve which has allowed different groups and sects to coexist more



Camera Press London

peacefully within Buddhism than has been the case in Christianity and Islam. On the other hand, the fact that Buddhism is centred in the order of monks can be a source of weakness. The Muslim destruction of the monasteries in the 11th century caused Buddhism to die out in India, and the religion has been attacked in the same way in this century in China and Tibet.

The Two Branches

Buddhism received a powerful boost in the 3rd century BC, when formidable Emperor Asoka, who controlled most of India, became a Buddhist and not only promoted the faith in India but sent missionaries abroad to Sri Lanka, Central Asia and as far away as the eastern Mediterranean. He was interested in Buddhism more as a moral code and a valuable social discipline than as a philosophical system and so, impressed by its emphasis on not harming living creatures, he himself gave up both warfare and hunting, and became an enthusiastic vegetarian. His influence brought Buddhism a substantial flow of converts, and growing popularity was the leading factor in the movement's steady development from an originally atheistic intellectual system into a world religion.

As part of this process the Buddha himself began to turn from a human being of superlative gifts into a divine figure. During Asoka's reign, many *stupas*, the earliest type of Buddhist shrine, were built; these were brick or stone mounds in which a relic of the Buddha himself or a Buddhist saint



Camera Press London



or king was preserved and venerated. Respect for the memory of the Buddha and other great figures of the movement was turning into worship.

Theravada

According to tradition, it was one of Asoka's sons, a monk named Mahinda, who led the first Buddhist mission to Sri Lanka. There the king was converted and established Buddhism as the official religion of the Sinhalese. Buddhism subsequently died out in India, and Sri Lanka now has the oldest continuous Buddhist tradition of any country in the world (see SINHALESE BUDDHISM). The form of Buddhism which took root there is called Theravada ('the doctrine of the elders'). From Theravada centres in

India it was carried to Burma, and became the accepted Buddhism of southeast Asia in Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Theravada today is the surviving representative of Hinayana Buddhism, one of the two broad branches into which the religion divided. The other is Mahayana ('great vehicle'), which became the Buddhism of China, Korea, Japan and Tibet. Mahayana shrugged off the early principle that only the saintly monk had any prospect of attaining nirvana, which was far beyond the reach of the ordinary Buddhist laity. Mahayana believed in divine saviours, through faith in whom any sincere believer could gain salvation, without the years of struggle and meditation of the older disci-

Buddhist worshippers put flowers in the hats of these statues, burn incense to them and periodically give them new clothes. Worship earns merit, which can be spent in a happy next life in a paradise before another rebirth on earth, or which can be used to alleviate the sufferings of a dead relative in one of the numerous hells

pline. These saviours were gods who exercised power in this world and who could be lovingly worshipped by their devotees.

Among them was the Buddha himself, who from at least the 1st century AD in northern India was depicted as a god in images that were intended to be worshipped. Previously he had been represented by a symbol suggesting both his

The coming Buddha saves people from danger, receives confessions of sins, and comes to the dying to lead them to his paradise

influence and his absence from the world – an empty throne, his footprints or the wheel of the Dharma. Now he was regarded as still being present in the world to help his followers, and he became only one of many Buddhas, some of whom had lived in the world before his time. One of the Pali texts lists 24 Buddhas who came before Gautama, while one Mahayana text lists 54 and another more than 100. Buddhist monks sometimes take the name of one of these Buddhas on entering the order, in much the way that Roman Catholic children are given the names of saints.

Some texts also give the names of Buddhas who are still to come. Much the most important of these, venerated all over the Buddhist world, is Maitreya, the Buddha who will be the next to appear, though it will not be for a great while yet. He will be born in the north of India, where Buddhism grew up, but meanwhile he inhabits a special heaven, in which his faithful followers can join him before returning to the earth in his train. The world in Maitreya's time will be a far better place than it is now, and everyone will live in ideal happiness. His name, which means 'Loving One', comes from *mitra*, 'friend', and there may well be a link with the Persian god Mithras (see MITHRAS).

The Great Beings

Even more attractive than the Buddhas, to many believers, were the Bodhisattvas – great beings who during many lives had reached the threshold of Buddhahood, but out of their tender compassion for living things had voluntarily delayed their entry to nirvana to remain in the world and help others. Many of them seem to have been descended from the popular gods of northern India, from which Buddhism originally came, and they became increasingly prominent in Mahayana texts from the 3rd century AD on.

Mahayana philosophers did not regard the Bodhisattvas as real, or the various Buddhas either, but tolerated them as necessary and desirable at the popular level, to carry the ordinary, ignorant believer upward to a spiritual level at which these imaginary entities could be discarded. At the popular level itself, however, they were and still are taken as saviours. Each has built up a vast treasure of spiritual merit

and each confers part of this merit on the believer, so side-stepping the effects of the believer's karma. Each presides over a paradise to which devotees go after death, and there they complete their spiritual journey to enlightenment without returning again to this world.

Lords of the Worlds

The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, the Lord Who Looks Down (in compassion on the faithful), became the most popular Buddhist deity in India and was virtually the national god of Tibet. If you think of him or speak his name in time of trouble, he will help, and his thousand arms symbolize his untiring energy in assisting human kind. He protects sailors from shipwreck, merchants from robbers and robbers in turn from punishment. He will give a woman a son or a daughter, according to choice. He shields his flock from fire, wild animals, snakes, lightning, evil magic and the machinations of enemies.

Aksobhya, the Unshakeable One, a popular deity in India in the early centuries of the Christian era, has a paradise in the east, to which those who live a good life or hear his name can go after death.

Amitabha, whose name means Unlimited Light, was also called Amitayus, Unlimited Life. He rules a paradise in the West called the Happy Land and all who go there will undoubtedly achieve enlightenment. In that delightful land sweet music falls continually from the clouds, the jewel-trees grow jewels as flowers and anything the fortunate believer desires will materialize when wished for. He was especially popular in China, as the presiding deity of the Pure Land sect, which maintained that his paradise could be attained by simple faith in him and calling his name. His cult spread from China to Korea and then to Japan, where he is still a much-loved Buddhist deity, under the Japanese name of Amida (see AMIDA).

Vairocana, the Descendant of the Sun, was identified in Japan with the national sun goddess, Amaterasu, for besides the male Buddhist saviours there were goddesses too. In China the male Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara was transformed into the merciful goddess Kuan Yin, protector of women and helper of anyone in trouble, who in Japan is called Kannon.

The Thunderbolt Vehicle

Both Hinduism and Buddhism developed Tantric schools, and Tantric Buddhism or Vajrayana (the Thunderbolt Vehicle) came to the fore in India from the 7th century on. The Tantric path required long training by a guru. Its sacred and secret writings, the Tantras, intended only for initiates, are couched in a symbolic code meant to be as incomprehensible to outsiders as that of Western alchemical texts.

The acquisition of magical power was a central aim of Tantrism and the eventual goal was to achieve total self-mastery. By identifying oneself with various gods and goddesses, vividly imagined and representing great impersonal cosmic forces, it was possible to achieve mastery of, and union with, the cosmos and the divine.

Deliberate breaking of conventional taboos was part of Tantric ritual as a way of cultivating detachment and making a spiritual breakthrough. Much Tantric imagery and ritual involved erotic symbolism, and sometimes erotic practices. In some Tantric writings the reconciliation of opposites which keeps the universe in existence is portrayed as the sexual embrace of the Buddha with the goddess Tara. Tantrism influenced the form of Mahayana Buddhism which took root in Tibet and Mongolia (see TANTRISM).

Buddhism in the West

Interest in oriental religions mounted in Europe and America in the 19th century, and the three Buddhist traditions which since then have made the strongest impact on the West have been Theravada, the Zen Buddhism of Japan, and the Mahayana Buddhism of Tibet. At first, knowledge of Buddhism came to the West from Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), through British administrators there like George Turnour of the Ceylon Civil Service, who published a Pali text as early as 1837. A particularly important figure was Professor T.W. Rhys Davids, who served as a magistrate in Ceylon and in 1881 founded the Pali Text Society, which set to work to publish the Pali Canon of Buddhist scriptures. The fact that the Theravada scriptures were the first to be published and translated led to a widespread assumption that this was the purest and truest form of Buddhism.

Knowledge of Buddhism and sympathetic



Serenity in stone: faces of Bodhisattvas, saints who are on the path to becoming Buddhas, at the Bayon Temple in Angkor Thom, Cambodia, built in the 12th century by the Emperor Jayavarman VII, a supporter of Buddhism in an area where Hinduism and Buddhism co-existed and influenced each other, as they had done earlier in India

spirituality built up from the 1950s and 1960s onwards.

Activity of the Soul

In 1959 the Chinese took total control of Tibet by force and the Dalai Lama fled the country. Other Tibetan lamas arriving in the West brought their native Buddhist traditions with them and founded centres in Europe and America. Probably the most influential of them was Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche (1939-87), who arrived in the West in 1963 and helped to found a Tibetan Buddhist meditation centre in Scotland four years later. He went to America in 1970, founded centres in Vermont, Colorado and Nova Scotia, and wrote numerous books. The Nichiren sect of Japanese Buddhism has also gained a foothold in the West in recent years (see NICHIREN).

Many factors have helped to commend Buddhism to Westerners dissatisfied with Christianity but of a religious turn of mind. They include the fact that Buddhism does not require belief in a God and acceptance of a set of dogmas, as well as its reputation for tolerance, its emphasis on not killing or harming living things, and – especially in Zen – its lack of confidence in reason as the principal or only way to truth. In *The Secret of the Golden Flower* C.G. Jung wrote: 'If I accept the fact that a god is absolute and beyond all human experience, he leaves me cold. I do not affect him, nor does he affect me. But if I know, on the other hand, that God is a mighty activity of the soul, at once I must concern myself with him.'

Meanwhile, Buddhism has also returned to the land of its birth. An important step was the founding in Calcutta in 1891 of the Maha Bodhi Society by Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933), born in Ceylon as David Hewavitarne and in his youth a member of the Theosophical Society. He later campaigned successfully for the restoration of Buddh Gaya as a pilgrimage centre. Gradually, Indian intellectuals have become interested in Buddhism as an important part of their historic and ideological heritage, while many thousands of former 'untouchables' have been converted to Buddhism since the 1950s.

(See also BOOK OF THE DEAD (TIBETAN); CHINA; JAPAN; TIBET)

FURTHER READING: R.H. Robinson, *The Buddhist Religion* (Dickenson, 1969); E. Conze, *Buddhism, Its Essence and Development* (Cassirer, 1951); T.O. Ling, *Dictionary of Buddhism* (Scribner, 1972), and *The Buddha* (Temple Smith, 1973); N.W. Ross, *Buddhism: A Way of Life and Thought* (Knopf, 1980); C. Humphreys ed, *The Wisdom of Buddhism* (Humanities Press, 1987); J. Snelling, *The Buddhist Handbook* (Century, 1987).

interest in it grew steadily in the West, especially in England, Germany and the United States. Archeologists began to discover and explore the remains of forgotten Buddhist centres in northern India, while philosophers, especially Schopenhauer and including Nietzsche and Thoreau, were attracted by the concepts of Buddhism. The Theosophical Society (see BLAVATSKY, THEOSOPHY), hoping to build a bridge between western and eastern spirituality, viewed Buddhism with an approving eye and promoted enthusiasm for it.

Western enthusiasts began to become Buddhist monks. The first of them was Allan Bennett (1872-1923), at one time a member of the Order of the Golden Dawn (see GOLDEN DAWN), who was ordained as a monk in 1902 and took the name Ananda Metteya. He was a strong influence on the founding of the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland in 1907 and edited its magazine, *Buddhism*. By far the best-known name in British Buddhism was Christmas Humphreys (1901-83), a distinguished lawyer and judge who translated Buddhist texts and wrote prolifically on the subject. Influenced at first by the Theosophists, he founded the Buddhist Lodge in 1924. It later broke away from the Theosophical Society and became the Buddhist Society, publisher of *The Middle Way*, the leading Western magazine on the subject.

Reports from travellers in Tibet stimulated interest in the religion and magic of that enticingly mysterious land, and some

Westerners went to train as lamas. A German writer, E.L. Hoffman (1898-1985), made a name for himself as Anagarika Govinda. An Englishman named Cyril Henry Hoskins (1911-81) wrote *The Third Eye* and many other best-selling books on Tibetan mystery and magic under the pseudonym Lobsang Rampa.

If Theravada was the principal form of Buddhism in Britain, in the United States it was Zen. Chinese and Japanese immigrants had taken Buddhism with them to North America in the 19th century, but among Americans of non-oriental extraction interest in Zen Buddhism was powerfully stimulated by Daizetz Tetaro Suzuki (1870-1966). A Japanese who trained under Zen masters in his native land, he was invited to England by the Swedenborg Society in 1921. He subsequently lectured at British and American universities and his numerous books introduced many Westerners to Zen traditions, though he himself thought that the Pure Land tradition might be better suited to the West.

Speaking at the World Conference of Religions in 1936, Suzuki impressed a young Englishman named Alan Watts (1915-73), a protege of Humphreys. Watts published his first book, *The Spirit of Zen*, in 1936 and emigrated to the United States in 1938. He was ordained an Episcopalian minister in Chicago, but left the church in 1950 and became a highly regarded and effective populariser of Zen and eastern traditions in America, where a powerful wave of interest in oriental religions and their



Buffalo

The American bison, on whom Plains Indians depended for survival; a major supernatural power in their myths, such as Buffalo Old Man and Old Woman in Kiowa or Apache tales; great buffalo dances as of Mandans, with full head-dresses from buffalo heads and mime of herd movement, used to lure herds for hunters; associated with rain, buffalo was prayed to by Sioux and others when rain was needed.

See GREAT PLAINS INDIANS.

Michael Hallford British Museum

Our ancestors believed that there was more to building a house than bricks and mortar. Rituals designed to ensure the prosperity of the building and its occupants included the burial of human beings — sometimes small children — beneath the foundations

BUILDERS' RITES

BEFORE A BUILDING of any type could be erected, it was necessary to propitiate the powers of Nature, because the order of Nature was being interfered with, and particularly the spirit of the earth on which the building would rest. Through every stage of the construction, from the initial selection of the site until the final completion of the roof-top, there followed a succession of magical rites.

In the choice of a site the spirit world was consulted and the entrails of animals examined for signs and portents. A sign of the intentions of the gods might be manifested through Nature itself. In the legend of the foundation of Mexico City, for instance, we are told how a group of Indians, observing an eagle holding a serpent in its talons, recognized this as an intimation from the gods that the city should be established on that spot (see AZTECS).

It was the custom in Ireland in the last century to stick a new spade into the earth and only if it had not been removed overnight by the fairies did building operations begin. Another Irish custom, equally bizarre, was that of throwing a hat into the air during a gale and building the house where it happened to fall, since such a site was considered likely to be sheltered from adverse winds. After the land was surveyed, it would be blessed by the priest or magician and thus made safe for occupation.

The orientation of a building with the sun was of immense symbolic importance. The Temple of Solomon, for instance, had entrance towers facing towards the east, and the Holy of Holies was at the west. The

altar of a Christian church is usually at the east end. This ancient association with the sun was deliberately flouted by Sir Walter Mildmay, in Puritan abhorrence of superstition, when he built the original Emmanuel College Chapel at Cambridge facing north and south rather than east-west.

To endow a new building with good fortune and to secure it against the assaults of evil spirits, bread and salt were laid in the foundations. It remained the custom as late as the 17th century to build a bottle of water and a piece of bread into the walls of English cottages, as charms to secure the occupant from want.

It was once common practice to sacrifice a human being to the Earth deity and it was believed that no building would stand unless

its foundations were laid in blood. In the old royal city of Mandalay, men were buried alive under the gates. In Siam victims were crushed to death in a pit. The custom survived into comparatively modern times among some primitive peoples; for instance, in 1881, the King of Ashanti (now a region of Ghana) mixed the blood of 200 maidens with the mortar when building a new palace. The survival of the custom in the West until Christian times is suggested by the discovery of skeletons in the foundations of old churches, as at Darrington, in Yorkshire, in 1895 when the church walls were found to be resting on a human skull. It is probable that the recurring stories of nuns and monks immured alive are based upon distorted traditions of this character. The legend that St Columba buried St Ronan beneath the foundations of his monastery to propitiate the guardian spirits of the soil may well have a similar basis. In the English fen-lands, traditionally, those who caused flooding by neglecting to keep up the sea walls would be used as living foundations when the walls were rebuilt.

Such practices were followed not merely as a form of psychic insurance for the durability of a building but with the additional aim of providing a ghostly guardian who would prevent the intrusion of hostile spirits, since it was assumed that a human being so sacrificed would haunt the site for ever. An example of this superstition came to light in 1966 with the discovery of the skeletons of babies who had been ritually entombed in the Roman fortress at Reculver, Kent. The tradition persists that the site is haunted by the sobbing ghost of 'a child that had been buried alive by the Romans'.

Shadows for Sale

These rites were replaced over the years by forms of sacrifice less offensive to sophisticated religious taste. A human shadow was used instead of the living person, in places as far apart as the British Isles and Rumania; there were even 'shadow traders' who secretly measured a man's shadow and buried the measurements beneath the foundations.

Puppets or domestic animals later replaced the human being as objects of sacrifice, the blood being poured into the foundations. In the early 1960s during restoration work at Lauderdale House in Highgate, London, workmen found part of a



Michael Hallford

Mansell Collection

Symbols to propitiate spirits and ensure a building's stability: an inscribed brick and 'tet' pillar, a symbol of stability, discovered in the foundations of an Egyptian building (above); European builder's mark of a circle and two mallets on a foundation stone (right)

goblet, two shoes and four mummified chickens which had been built into the chimney breast in the late 16th century. More recently a mummified cat was found immured in a cottage wall at Cricksea, Essex, where it had been buried alive to protect the house against fire. Coins are frequently discovered cemented into the brickwork of old chimneys; it has been suggested that the motive was to provide 'ransom money for the person who ought to have been there'.

The custom of placing documents beneath foundation stones is extremely ancient. It is recorded that Chaldean kings, interested in antiquity, used to tunnel into the ruins of old palaces for the foundation records deposited by their predecessors. Closer to our modern rites were those performed at Crowland Abbey, Lincolnshire, in 1112 when the Abbot laid the first cornerstone while the citizens submitted written offerings of either money or unpaid labour.

The actual materials used in the work of construction were ritualistically important, particularly in relation to ancient tree worship. This tradition survived among the Ozarks hillmen of the United States in the custom of transferring some of the timbers from an older building to a new one. An English superstition asserts that it is courting trouble if a builder uses tomb-stones instead of bricks.

In Africa and the East, building operations were often festive occasions, as were those brought to the United States by the early European settlers. No ceremony could

have been more light-hearted than the erection of a cottage in Donegal, which used to be a communal undertaking with the neighbours carrying wood and stones to the site to the music of a hired fiddler. Among some primitives, building operations could be far from joyful, however; the Bapedi tribe of South Africa, for example, had to maintain a state of absolute continence during the work of construction, and any departure from such restraint, it was thought, would impair the soundness of the completed building.

Topping Out

Within the house the hearth was regarded as a domestic shrine and the door as a barrier against spirits, the latter bearing magical inscriptions. At Alatri in Italy phallic symbols were carved on the lintel of a postern or passage in the walls of the citadel. In the Channel Islands, however, house builders considerably provided roof ledges upon which witches could rest while on the way to their destinations.

From classical times to the present the completion of a building has been celebrated as a feast. In ancient Rome the contractor, having erected a state or religious building, offered thanks to the Bona Dea, a fertility

goddess, who then became its protectress.

The once universal 'topping out' ceremony, in which a barrel of beer was drunk while a tree or wreath was attached to the roof of a completed building, survives today only in attenuated form. It is still observed occasionally, however, as in 1963 when a green bough was nailed to the newly completed dome of Smithfield Poultry Market, 'as a means of warding off evil spirits'. The topping out ceremony in its original splendour can still be seen in Germany where a bush like a Christmas tree is placed in position after the last timber of the house has been put on. In one such ceremony one of the carpenters gives thanks to God, 'the highest builder in Heaven'. Healths are drunk, after which the glasses are thrown to the ground to prevent bad luck.

Little else of the potent magic of the building trade has survived in the modern world. And yet public buildings and bridges are still ritually opened, and the first sod of a new site turned with a new spade, or the first mortar laid with a shiny trowel. And there is still the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone, with its inscribed tribute to local dignitaries.

(See also HOUSE.)

ERIC MAPLE

Foetuses of dogs and llamas on sale in Bolivia: they bring good luck if buried under the foundations of a new building. This belief is probably a survival of the earlier custom of killing an animal or a human being to provide a spirit-guardian for a building

FURTHER READING: L. Sprague de Camp, *The Ancient Engineers* (Doubleday); R. Thonger, *A Calendar of German Customs* (Dufour, 1968); N. Wymer, *English Town Crafts* (C. River Books, 1976); E. E. Evans, *Irish Folkways* (Routledge, 1966).



Symbol of virility, fertility and power, the bull was the focus of many cults in ancient times from India to the Mediterranean. In Crete, young men and women literally 'took the bull by the horns' in order to extract these sacred qualities. The modern bullfight originated in beliefs which date back thousands of years

BULL

CONTEMPORARY MAN in Western society has but one basic interest in bulls — their role in the production of beef. For most of us, even this knowledge is quite indirect since in urban society we rarely encounter bulls except piecemeal in the butcher's. It is natural then if we do not know of the lengthy, intensive and dramatic involvement of our ancestors with these creatures, or realize that millions of people in the world today still closely relate their lives to them.

The story of men and bulls begins in the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age. Man was a hunter, and some of the most widespread and frequently hunted animals were various types of wild cattle. Those best known to ancient man in Europe and the Near East were a species now called *bos primigenius*, *urus*, or aurochs — a huge, savage creature with shaggy hair and long, curving horns, from which Spanish fighting cattle are descended. Of all the animals hunted by our forefathers, the aurochs were probably the most valuable. Not only were they a plentiful source of meat but their bones were used for spear points, harpoons and fishhooks, and their skins were fashioned into clothing, boats and tents.

Wild cattle are herding animals, the aurochs herd consisting of a number of cows and calves dominated by a single fierce bull. Consequently, he who would successfully hunt the aurochs had first to kill this dangerous paramount bull. And ancient bulls, like their modern descendants, were powerful, swift, sharp-horned creatures. Standing six feet high or more at the shoulders, they were assuredly a most difficult animal to kill. These ancient bull hunts, these Stone Age *corridas*, must certainly have been savage, bloody affairs in which members of both species perished. Thus, while the aurochs was one of early man's primary benefactors, he was a dangerous and unwilling one; a benefactor who produced profound awe and fear in the hearts of those who hunted.

Art for Meat's Sake

A measure of these emotions is discernible in much of the cave art of south-west Europe (see CAVE ART). Produced from about 40,000 years ago and extending through the Magdalenian culture period, altogether some 25,000 years, it is with few exceptions an art of animals. In much cave art, such as at Altamira in Spain and at Lascaux in France, wild bulls and cows predominate. Scholars agree that for the most part it is magical art; this theory that it was 'art for meat's sake' has been adduced from two kinds of evidence, the art itself and its location. As to the art, not only does it concern animals, but the animals are repeatedly



The kings of Crete were apparently revered as incarnations of the bull god of the island, and bulls played an important part in Cretan religion: ritual vase from Cnossus in the form of a bull's head, used for making offerings of oil or wine

drawn pierced with spears and darts, with traps set before them, headless, disembowelled, dying. Clearly these drawings were part of sympathetic magical rituals based on the belief that the image of an animal is in some way connected with the real animal.

The location of the drawings also demonstrates their magical nature. In virtually every case they are found not in cave mouths or on rocks in the open, but deep within subterranean caverns, far removed from the areas of day-to-day living. We must assume that this artistic secretiveness was not born of modesty but of fear of discovery and retaliation by the very animals which man sought to kill.

The Supreme Bull

During early Neolithic times, when cattle were domesticated, a new dimension was added to the relationship of man and bull. Precisely how this happened is not known, but it was a tremendous forward stride for humankind. It released man from the bondage of the hunting culture. No longer was he a virtual slave to the arbitrary movements of wild animal herds. Now he could keep a ready supply of meat and later milk on hand at all times.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of animal domestication, however, was that it appears to have been directly responsible for our ancestors' first learning that sexual activity is connected with pregnancy. While he had undoubtedly witnessed copulation among animals through the years, there is no evidence that man saw the relationship between the exuberant sexuality of the bull and the subsequent calving of the cow, or in his own sexual activity and the child-bearing of his women.

Once animals began to be domesticated, however, proximity and daily observation allowed him to perceive the cause and effect relationship in procreation. Further, when Neolithic man made this discovery, bulls came to assume a new value in his eyes. Still a symbol of boundless strength and power, bulls were then esteemed for their sexuality as well, for it was obvious that a single animal could impregnate an entire herd.

During this time man also learned the rudiments of agriculture — that seeds when sown would produce plants. But it was many years before the value of breaking the earth became known and before the plough was invented. For most of this period, cattle-raising and agriculture were separate spheres of activity. Cattle were for meat and milk; grain was for bread and beer. Late in the Neolithic Age, however, man saw a relationship between his cattle and his crops. He believed that the great fertility of the bull could influence the successful growth of grain. As a cattle-raiser he knew the tremendous fertilizing power of the bull. From this it was but a step to believe that the fertility of the bull could be as efficacious for grain as it was for cattle.

One of the first recorded hymns shows clearly that praise is given to 'the great bull, the supreme bull which treads the holy pasturage — planting corn and making fields luxuriant'. This is not homage to the earth



Egyptian bronze statue of the sacred Apis bull, fathered by a ray of moonlight and after death embalmed and buried like a king

or to seeds, but to the bull for his aid in walking among the plants and causing them to grow by emanating fertility. The plough plays only an incidental part; it opens the earth to receive the fertile force.

Exalted Overpowering Ox

Historians agree that all the first great civilizations of the Tigris-Euphrates region and those of the Nile and the Indus rivers were built upon the broad, firm base of stockbreeding and agriculture. In the hunting cultures, all able-bodied men hunted; there was little division of labour or

specialized tasks not involving the hunt. With animal domestication and planting, however, one man's effort could feed several other men, whose time and labour were then released for other pursuits. In time the inevitable enrichment of culture thus effected resulted in the first civilizations.

During this period, the bull continued to play a central role in man's life, as the obvious inseminator of herds and the imagined fertilizer of the fields; both archeological relics and records of early civilizations relate repeatedly to the bull. In the analysis of these materials, however, a most surprising fact emerges: one or more of the central gods in the religions of each of these peoples was a bull god. Hymns and prayers to these deities indicate that as

The Bull in Heliopolis

An Egyptian hymn to the great bull god:

Hymn to Amen-Ra, the Bull in Heliopolis,
president of all the gods,
beneficent god, beloved one,
the giver of the warmth of life to all beautiful cattle,
Hail to thee, Amen-Ra,
Lord of the thrones of . . . Thebes,
Bull of his mother,
Chief of his fields . . .
Lord of the sky,
eldest son of the earth,
lord of the things which exist,
establisher of things,
establisher of all things,

One in his times among the gods,
Beautiful Bull of the company of the gods,
father of the gods,
maker of men,
creator of beasts and cattle,
lord of the things which exist,
creator of the staff of life,
master of the herbage whereon cattle live,
Form made by Ptah,
beautiful child,
beloved one.

From E. A. W. Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians*

well as being a symbol of great strength and fertility, the bull was believed to be directly responsible for thunder, storms, rain, floods, in fact for water in any form. Other evidence, especially from Egypt, links the bull god with the sun and the moon.

Throughout ancient Sumeria, a bull god called Enlil was worshipped as god of the storm and supreme god of fertility. It was through his power that there was water, the fields were green, and all things grew. Mankind itself drew life and sustenance from him. Praising Enlil as their father, the 'exalted overpowering ox', 'Lord of the world of life', 'powerful chief of the gods', the Sumerians of about 3000 BC addressed him with stirring invocations.

Similarly, in ancient India, a wealth of evidence indicates a bull-oriented religion among the earliest inhabitants of the Indus valley. The Aryans who conquered them, moreover, c 1500 BC, left an eloquent literary testimony concerning bull worship. Hundreds of hymns by these people, originally passed on orally from generation to generation, were ultimately written down and compose a sacred Hindu literary work known as the *Rig-Veda*. The Aryans worshipped a number of bull gods – Dyaus, Parjanya, Rudra, Indra and Agni – and many of the *Rig-Veda* hymns are devoted to them.

The archeological testimony from Egypt is even more compelling. Not only do we know that the people worshipped a variety of bull gods, but that two cults, those of Apis and Mnevis, were probably the oldest, most widespread and enduring of all Egyptian religious sects. The worship of both bull gods was quite similar. Each was considered to be a god of fertility and strength, each had celestial aspects, and each had elaborate connections with other gods. Each god was believed to have an earthly manifestation, Apis being immaculately conceived by the impregnation of a special cow by a ray of moonlight, while Mnevis was the incarnation of the sun-god Amon-Re. Upon the death of each divine bull, it was embalmed like a king and interred in large tombs which were known as Serapea.

An additional association between men and bulls appeared in both early Mesopotamia and Egypt; kings related themselves to bulls and bull gods. Thus in Sumeria the great Sargon called himself the *patesi* or 'tenant

farmer' of Enlil. King Rimush acknowledged that he was appointed by Enlil. And Naram-Sin, who wore the horns of bulls into battle, presented captive kings to Enlil in recognition of the bull god's sovereignty. This close association between king and god in Sumeria had many interesting facets. Both bull god and king came to share the title 'Wild Bull'. Sargon was so called, and the seal of his servant shows a man watering a bull. Kings wore bull-horned head-dresses as a symbol of their divine appointment and power. And to make the interrelation complete, there arose the custom of placing long, curled beards upon images of the bull god. This practice, probably ritualistic in origin, was rooted in the conception common in Mesopotamia that the beard was a sign of strength and masculinity. Consequently, only Sumerian kings were allowed to grow long beards.

The relationship in Egypt between kings and bull gods was even closer. Narmer-Menes, the king who forcibly united Upper and Lower Egypt into a single kingdom not long before 3000 BC, worshipped Apis and spread the gospel of the bull god throughout the land. Moreover, either his adroitness or his simplicity led him actually to conceive of himself as a bull. In either case, at a very early date bull worship in Egypt became identified with king worship.

Since bull worship was such a characteristic feature of all the earliest civilizations, it was inevitable that many of the other culture centres throughout the Mediterranean, facing similar problems and holding similar values, would sooner or later focus attention on the bull. Thus in Crete, in Greece and in Rome, man's relations with bulls reflected

both his Near Eastern heritage and his own particular cultural needs.

In Crete, for example, while the bull god was primarily connected with the sun and fertility, he was likewise linked with the force, the deep-throated roar, and the destructiveness of earthquakes, which were common to the island. Crete also developed the first public, ritualized bullfights. In Greece, the bull became the focus for socially approved rites of sexual abandon which evolved directly into Greek theatre. And in Rome, as the foremost rival of Christianity for centuries, Mithraism introduced the ritualistic washing away of sins and purification of the body with a bath in the blood dripping from a dying bull.

The Minotaur's Prey

Cretan kings, called Minos, were supreme in both the spiritual and material lives of their subjects, like the kings of Egypt. Apparently revered as the incarnation of the island bull god, Minos stands at the centre of all Cretan legends and myths. As natural leader of the bull cult, the king was the focus of activity during celebrations.

Stories of Minos and of the ceremonies and practices of Cretan bull worship spread widely about the Mediterranean. Eventually many of them became part of the mythology of neighbouring groups in the Aegean area, such as the Greeks. There is, for example, the Greek legend of Europa and the Bull in which the maiden Europa was seduced and taken across the sea to Crete by the god Zeus in the form of a bull. Here she gave birth to Minos, who later became the bull-god-king of the island.

Another early Greek myth refers to Minos as the tyrant who ruled over Crete and who demanded tribute from Athens every nine years in the form of seven young men and seven maidens. On arrival in Crete, these youths were taken into a giant maze and released. Here they became the prey of a ferocious man-bull or Minotaur who roamed the confines of the maze in search of such human tribute. This Minotaur was the result of the union between Pasiphae, wife of Minos, and a bull with which she had become enamoured. By concealing herself within a wooden cow, constructed for her by the master craftsman Daedalus, she had seduced the bull. The man-bull creature that she bore was imprisoned by Minos in a

Left Spanish bullfighting is a descendant of the Cretan bull games and, more remotely, of the hunting of savage wild bulls by prehistoric man. The bullfight is not a sport but a ritual combat of human courage and skill against brute force: in the writings of Ernest Hemingway and other modern authors it has acquired its own heroic aura of the terror of death and the pride of victory

Right Cretan bull-leaping, from a fresco at Cnossus; each dancer grasped the charging bull's horns, which were regarded as the focus of its life-giving power, was hurled up into the air, turned a somersault on the bull's back and landed on his feet on the ground



Anne Bari



C. M. Dixon



labyrinth at Cnossus, and it was here that the young Athenians met their end. Long did Athens live in fear of Crete and its Minotaur until one of her heroes, Theseus, entered the labyrinth, and slew the beast.

Scholars have interpreted the myth with the aid of other myths and have concluded that it is an account, albeit garbled and distorted, of early bull cult practices. These included three major groups of ritualistic observances: fertility dances, bullfights or bull fertility rites, and sacrifices.

Bull Dancers of Crete

Each spring, just at the time when all nature revived, Minos held the spectacular island corrida, or running of the bulls. Every phase of these great rituals, from the chase

and capture of the wild bulls to their final death in the arena, appears in hundreds of Cretan art forms. From this evidence we know that these were great fertility rites which were performed in an effort to impregnate the land with new life. This impregnation was accomplished at the arena in two ways: by horn grappling and by bull sacrifice.

The Cretans, like the ancient Sumerians, considered the horns of a bull to be the focus, the concentrated essence of the bull's strength and fertility. At the corrida it was the magic, fertile horns of the wild bull which became the centre of religious interest. The initial part of the Cretan bullfight was consequently composed of a series of ritual actions designed to procure a portion of

this tremendous power for the benefit of mankind. To do this, specially trained male and female athletes went into the arena unarmed. Standing before the onslaught of a bull, the sacred performers had neither cape nor sword, and in fact did nothing until the beast was almost upon them. Then by grasping the horns of the charging bull a split second before the lowered head snapped upward in a mighty toss, the athlete was catapulted into the air. Performing a forward somersault in mid-air, he landed with his feet on the back of the bull or on the ground.

That the feat was extremely dangerous is obvious. There are, in fact, numerous Cretan depictions of athletes trapped under the hoofs and caught between the horns of



Michael Holford

raging bulls. The aim of this and other horn-grasping methods was non-lethal contact with the horns of the sacred bull. With every grasping, every swing, every toss, the bull cult devotees believed that their champions were absorbing strength and fertility for the ultimate benefit of all men.

The Cretan obsession with male virility is further evidenced by the numerous images of bulls showing erect phalli found at Cnossus. An even more striking indication of Cretan pride in male sexuality is the fact that all female performers in the bullring wore a breechcloth bunched together toward the front to give the appearance of the male organ. In the spring then, as the warming sun quickened the land, Cnossus held its sacred bullring ceremonies designed to

fructify the earth and its creatures with the exuberant sexuality of the bull.

The spread of the bull cult from Crete was inevitable. Assimilating elements from bull religions all over the Near East and Africa, Cretans used them in creating many spectacular bull rituals of their own, and in turn spread these throughout the Mediterranean world. These practices were usually modified by those who adopted them, but many of them took root around the shores of the Mediterranean and became the hybrid systems of bull ritual that were to develop into the modern Spanish bullfight.

JACK CONRAD

FURTHER READING: J.R. Conrad, *The Horn and the Sword* (Dutton, 1957). See also F. Altheim, *A History of Roman Religion*

Wandering in the desert after their escape from Egypt, the Israelites demanded visible gods to lead them. They melted down their golden ear-rings to make a statue of a bull-calf (Exodus, chapter 32): The Worship of the Golden Calf, by Filippo Lippi

(Dutton, 1938); L. Cottrell, *The Bull of Minos* (Evans, London, 1953); Sir A. Evans, *The Palace of Minos* (Biblo and Tannen, 1921); E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (Oxford University Press, 1969); H. Frankfort, *Before Philosophy* (Penguin, London, 1949); W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Beacon Press, 1968); L. Spence, *Myths and Legends of Ancient Egypt* (Harrap, London, 1949); R. Whitlock, *Bulls through the Ages* (Lutterworth Press, 1977).



BURIAL

In the Shadow of Death

The disposal of the dead nowadays is approached with brisk, professional efficiency; burial rites are becoming increasingly impersonal. Yet underlying our aseptic attitude, the age-old emotions of mourning for our loved ones and fear of their returning to haunt us still persist

VERY FEW PEOPLE want to die. Very few admit that they will, and almost everyone everywhere has hoped that survival can somehow be contrived if enough trouble is taken. The trouble can be taken by the hoper himself, behaving well enough in life to earn immortality; or even, if he is lucky in his religion, by repentance on his deathbed. Or his survivors may propitiate someone or something on his behalf.

Life after death can also be thought of in two ways. The spirit may survive, bodiless, or reborn in a new human, a tree, an animal, or an ancestor figure. Or the body itself may be resurrected in the flesh for the spirit to inhabit. Most funeral customs are the result of one of these two ways of thinking, and the most elaborate rites have come from the conviction that the reborn spirit will need in its future life all that it had on earth, so that if it is to settle comfortably it must be as rich as possible, often at great cost to the living.

At the funeral of a king in Scythia, for instance, slaves and horses were killed and buried with him, while the Egyptians of the Middle Kingdom were content to bury the great with wooden and clay models of their slaves, houses, animals and boats. In China all the possessions, including whole armies, navies, and air forces, were traditionally fashioned out of paper and burnt at the funeral. Through the centuries the importance accorded to death has declined, a sensible shift from human sacrifice through wood to paper.

Two opposite motives lie behind burial customs all through history: one is affection for the dead and the other is fear of them. Fear causes burial in a sealed container, a coffin six feet underground, a mound or a jar. Affection provides something red, to give blood and so 'new life' to the corpse, as in this South American burial (left): or food and useful articles for the dead man to use in the afterlife, like the beaker in this reconstruction of a prehistoric burial at Shrewton in Wiltshire (right)

Not all customs have been elaborate, but all successful religions have included in their rituals the means for ensuring some form of life beyond death. On the other hand, no religion has managed to demonstrate what *does* happen after death, and so there are also rituals to protect the living if anything goes wrong, preventing the furious ghost, unable to find a new body or paradise or whatever, from haunting his careless kin. Terror of the unsettled spirits of the dead dies very hard; food may be put out for them, or their names made taboo so that they are not inadvertently summoned. Graveyards are still shunned at night, fingers are crossed, and very few people are prepared to deny the existence of ghosts with complete confidence.

The Trappings of Fear

Over thousands of years, the world's customs have become such a tangle of facts, faiths, superstitions and rationalizations that it is hard to be sure of the real meaning of any particular custom. However, the customs themselves, all rooted in the ancient and continuing hopes and fears, follow a consistent pattern. We have a common day-dream of sudden wealth: 'What would you do if you won the Pools?' We would be reborn, of course, a trip round the world, everything new, a new life. Usually, as losers, we make do with an occasional new suitcase, but our clothes are clean and we have a new face-flannel for a holiday. Similarly with the dead, the body is washed, straightened and wrapped in new cloth for





its new state, and it probably goes in a new box, in a new hole, six feet deep.

With all this there will be prayers to help the spirit leave the body and to comfort it in the afterlife; some religions, including Christianity, pass the responsibility on to God, and neither tell the dead what to do nor give him ghostly possessions. But the love-hate ambivalence of all family relationships persists in death; gold, blood, hair, memorial plaques, flowers, ashes in a debased baroque urn on the mantelshelf – whichever we use, our motives are obscure and dark, coloured by superstition in the most rational of us, twitched back from the edge of common sense by a little nudge of fear. Hygiene and honour may seem to compel us, but the washing, anointing, parcelling-up, shutting in a box, burying deep and pinning down with a heavy stone may also be seen to come from fright.

The Business of Burial

A state funeral in England or America still has much pageantry; troops slow-marching with reversed rifles to bands playing the Dead March in *Saul*, black crepe muffling the drums, the coffin on a horse-drawn gun carriage, and the mournful notes of the 'Last Post'; but state funerals are rare.

When the average Englishman dies at home, the funeral is organized by an undertaker, who is called in as soon as possible. Some people still keep the body in the house, and then one of the family, or a nurse, may lay it out before he comes. The corpse is stripped, straightened, washed, and dressed in clean

or new nightdress or pyjamas, the eyes and mouth are closed, the hands folded on the breast, the hair brushed and combed, and a clean sheet is put over the body, turned down to show the face. If the undertaker's assistant comes to do the laying-out, he will also pin on a square like a nappy after the washing, shave a noticeable beard, and arrange the corpse, using bandages for arms and legs, to look as if it is asleep with the head a little on one side. He has been taught to step back at intervals to see that the effect is 'natural'. (If there is a delay before the funeral in hot weather, the corpse may be embalmed. It is not eviscerated; the blood is simply drawn off through a vein in the armpit and replaced with a formalin-based embalming fluid.) The corpse is then put into the coffin and covered with a shroud to match the pillow and lining, if the family prefers this to ordinary clothes.

In some parts of Britain, relatives and close friends traditionally came to see the corpse and at night one of the family would sit up with it, with candles at head and feet, but this is now rare, and viewing is becoming rare too. More and more people prefer not to keep the body in the house at all, but have the undertaker's men lay it out and take it straight back to his shop, where there are special rooms for visiting if required.

The coffin is made of wood. Most undertakers now sell caskets as well as coffins, an American fashion for a rectangular box instead of the traditional tapered shape.

Notices of the funeral are sent out privately and to the newspapers, and as soon

Other people's methods of disposing of their dead usually seem bizarre *Above* In Sicily corpses were placed on shelves in the catacombs; a similar method is used in some of the modern American mausoleums *Right* In Nigeria the bodies of criminals are denied proper tribal burial and are thrown onto a platform and left to disintegrate *Far right* In the East Indies a widow might be buried alive with her dead husband, to accompany him in the otherworld: an 18th century engraving

as the arrangements can be made and the family gathered, the corpse is buried. The hearse is a powerful, black car like an estate-wagon, much more expensive than most people have in life, and either it is driven to the house with the coffin already in it, or it arrives empty and the undertaker's bearers carry the coffin out, on their shoulders in the south, down at arm's length by the handles in the north. All over the coffin and on the roof of the hearse (and sometimes in a special car as well) are the flowers, often made up into wreaths and crosses as in the 19th century, but mostly now in sheaves, large flat arrangements tied with bows and bagged in cellophane. The hearse drives very slowly to the church or the cemetery chapel, followed by the matching cars of the undertaker's fleet, containing the mourners.

When they arrive at the church, the coffin is carried in and set on draped trestles before the altar for the burial service. Then it is taken to the grave, already dug, and lowered in. The words of committal are read by the priest, and the mourners may throw a



little earth onto the coffin before they leave. Later the grave is filled by the cemetery staff, and the flowers are put on top of it.

Some months later, there may be a memorial service which strangers can attend if the family feels the dead to have been very loved or distinguished, and in any case when the grave has settled a memorial stone, slab ('mousetrap' in the trade), or curb may be put up with name, dates of birth and death, and a remembering or loving message. In the last century, these stones were often large and fanciful; now the authorities in charge have clamped down on size and style, and also encourage lawn cemeteries, plain fields with little bronze plaques let flat into the ground so that the grass can easily be cut with a motor-mower. Graves may be visited, and flowers placed or planted, but not many people visit their family graves regularly.

Cosmetics for the Corpse

During the 19th century, funerals were much more complicated than this, and hung over the family for at least a year, during which it was almost compulsory to wear black. The periods of mourning for different degrees of blood relationship were exactly laid down and exactly followed; a widow might wear black for the rest of her life. Now, some old-fashioned people wear dark clothes for the funeral, and men may wear a black tie or an armband for a little while, but that is all. The English see less and less necessity for 'a good funeral' and for the outward rites of grief and mourning.

In the United States of America, however, where funerals were once deliberately simple, the undertakers, who call themselves 'funeral directors' with more conviction than they do in England, have steadily increased the possibilities of big spending on funerals, both as status symbols and as 'grief-therapy', and though mourning clothes are as unfashionable as they are in England, everything else is more elaborate. The undertaker plays a more prominent part throughout. The corpse is almost always embalmed, the face and hands are carefully painted, hair tinted and waved, and spectacles set in place. A complete new outfit (dress or suit, underclothing, hose, shoes) is put on, though nothing shows below the waist, and an artistic arrangement made in a rich wooden or metal casket, lined with ruched and tucked velvet. It is set up in a bower of flowers in an interior-decorated reposing room at the funeral home, where friends often visit the glamorous corpse for several days before the funeral.

The emphasis, exactly as in Ancient Egypt, is on eternal preservation. No 'grave goods' are supplied, but the undertaker does everything he can to foster the belief that the incomplete embalming, the forever metal casket, and the concrete vault that may be bought to enclose it, will prevent decomposition.

Black Crepe and Plumes

The Roman Catholic countries of Europe and South America have neither simplified their burial customs, as in England, nor

changed their slant as in the United States, but rather cling to the old black-and-baroque fashions of the 18th and 19th centuries. Mourning is still extensively worn, and there are sometimes horse-drawn hearses with black plumes and velvet caparisons. The motor-hearses have richly carved and gilded decorations, and there are longer processions and more flowers. Graves are still regularly visited.

Roman Catholics also preserve the custom of having a portrait of the dead person at the tomb, an ancient and widespread practice that produced superb portraits and ancestor figures. Some of the most interesting were carried on royal coffins in medieval England and France. The corpse was formerly carried exposed on top of the coffin so that all might see that the king was dead, but later it was put inside and was replaced by a portrait statue, robed and crowned. The few which survive may be seen in Westminster Abbey. The modern pictures for the average man are a very dim reminder, small sepia photographs set in the tombstone.

Primitive man lived in tiny communities in an enormous world with long hours of darkness. There is less room for fear in our shrunken, bright, and crowded world. Millions of us are hardly conscious of night at all, the unknown is receding into space, and our funeral customs, already diluted from primitive rituals, are going the way of all religious ceremony, becoming more and more alike, less and less urgent.

BARBARA JONES

The Symbolism of Funeral Rites

Men have lost their reason in nothing so much as their religion, wherein stones and clouts make martyrs; and, since the religion of one seems madness unto another, to afford an account or rationale of old Rites requires no rigid Reader. That they kindled the pyre aversely, or turning their face from it, was an handsome Symbol of unwilling ministration; that they washed their bones with wine and milk, that the mother wrapped them in linen and dried them in her bosom, the first fostering part, and place of their nourishment; that they opened their eyes towards heaven, before they kindled the fire, as the place of their hopes or original, were no improper Ceremonies . . . that in strewing their

tombs the *Romans* affected the Rose, the Greeks *Amaranthus* and myrtle; that the Funeral pyre consisted of sweet fuel Cypress, Fir, Larix, Yew, and Trees perpetually verdant, lay silent expressions of their surviving hopes. Wherein Christians who deck their Coffins with Bays, have found a more elegant Emblem. For that he seeming dead will restore itself from the root, and its dry and exuccous leaves resume their verdure again; which, if we mistake not, we have also observed in furze. Whether the planting of yew in Churchyards hold not its original from ancient Funeral rites, or as an Emblem of Resurrection, from its perpetual verdure, may also admit conjecture . . .

That they buried their dead on their backs, or in a supine position, seems agreeable unto profound sleep, and common posture of dying; contrary to the most natural way of birth; Nor unlike our pendulous posture, in the doubtful state of the womb . . .

That they carried them out of the world with their feet forward, not inconsonant unto reason: as contrary unto the native posture of man, and his production first into it. And also agreeable unto their opinions, while they bid adieu unto the world, not to look again upon it; whereas *Mahometans* who think to return to a delightful life again, are carried forth with their heads forward . . .

Sir Thomas Browne *Urn Burial* (1658)



The Origins of Burial

The deliberate burial of the dead is one of man's earliest cultural achievements. It was first associated with the culture of Neanderthal man, towards the close of the Middle Stone Age. In the later Stone Age when present-day man made his appearance, some 40,000 years ago, there was a great outburst of magical, artistic activity, evidence of which can be found in the cave art of southern France (see CAVE ART). At the same time, there was a greater elaboration both of graves and grave goods; objects were placed beside the corpse and the bones of the dead were sometimes coloured with red ochre. In living cultures, where it is possible to establish the meanings of such customs, the red of the ochre is often associated with blood, a basic element in life itself. In these same societies the burial of the grave goods implies their continued use by the dead though in a different form from life on earth. It therefore seems probable that by the time of the Upper Paleolithic Age, the period of cave art, man had some idea of continuity after death, of another world, a land of the dead, of which the Christian heaven and hell is but a dualistic expression.

The basic logical requirement of such a conception is the development of a dualistic view of man's nature, which is seen as split into flesh and spirit, mind and matter, body and soul. Of these two elements, one dies with the body, one lives on after death. So that life and death are not two completely opposed states: the spirit interpenetrates death and peoples the otherworld with the living dead.

The significance of the appearance of elaborate burial customs and artistic achievements in the Upper Paleolithic Age is greater than at first appears. For their existence suggests that by this time man had developed a means of elaborating concepts and ideas, a language such as we know today. The development of language from a more elementary sign system, such

Marking the resting place of the dead with imperishable stone, as a perpetual memorial and a symbol of eternal life, has been a common feature of burial for many thousands of years: a prehistoric dolmen or 'chamber tomb' in Ireland, which was probably once wholly or partially covered with earth



C. M. Dixon

as animals possess, was undoubtedly the greatest technological advance in the history of man. It is the feature that most clearly separates contemporary man from the apes.

Thinking is not confined to the users of language, but there can be no doubt that the development of thought and its use as a major instrument of human growth is dependent upon the invention of a communication system of this kind. One of the first signs of this advance in the technology of communications is the appearance of burial customs which suggest that man had developed a set of ideas which divided his nature into body and soul, and his universe into earth and heaven, or this world and the next. The belief in immortality, as the famous anthropologist Malinowski pointed out, is one of the principal sources of religious inspiration.

A Cemetery in the Belly

The burial customs we know from direct observation and written record, rather than from digging into the past, display a number of striking similarities, as well as a wide range of variation in other respects. The variations are in specific customs such as methods of disposal. Burial in the earth (inhumation) is only one such method. Other forms include burial in caves and in mounds or tumuli, obvious forerunners of the Egyptian pyramids and the mausoleums of Europe, by which the important dead are singled out for exceptional treatment. Water burial is practised by seafaring peoples not only out of necessity but also as a way of honouring the great. In Scandinavian legend the corpse of the slain Balder, with his wife and horse, and the gift of Odin's ring Draupnir, was laid in his ship upon a funeral pyre and launched blazing out to sea (see BALDER). Elsewhere, as among the LoDagaa of northern Ghana, burial in a river or its bank is a method of cleansing the community of someone who has died a 'bad death'.

The placing of the dead in trees or on scaffolds is found in many parts of the world and is especially associated with the Zoroastrian religion, practised by the Parsee community of Bombay. Their holy book, the *Zend-Avesta*, proclaims a punishment of a thousand stripes for a person who shall bury in the earth the corpse of dog or

man, and not disinter it before the end of the second year. For only such a treatment can secure the proper ascent of the dead to the other world. (See PARSEES.)

The Sioux and other American Plains Indians also buried their dead on platforms, and sat for days beneath them to keep the dead company. This may have been partly to protect the body against wild animals; for the same purpose other nomadic tribes used cremation. Eastern Indians often practised a secondary burial – disinterring a corpse, scraping the bones clean, tying them into a skin and burying the bundle – sometimes in a pot, to be kept near the family. Plains Indians would often employ a symbolic second burial, cutting a lock of hair from the deceased, wrapping it in skins and keeping it as a sacred possession.

Cannibalism, in those relatively rare parts of the world where it was practised, was sometimes a recognized means of disposing of the dead and was an obligation on the surviving relatives. The meat of the funeral feast is 'nothing less than the corpse of the departed kinsman'. Of inhabitants of the eastern highlands of New Guinea it has been remarked that 'their cemeteries are their bellies'. Certainly this mode of disposal of the dead, the consumption of one generation by the next, is a striking way of conquering death.

Methods of disposing of the dead vary from people to people. But they may also vary within a particular group. We have already seen how important leaders may be accorded special treatment; 'sinners' or despised categories of persons may be differentiated in the same way, especially those who have died a 'bad death'; for example, suicides, witches and those killed by drowning or by lightning, young children who have not yet been fully incorporated into the society and, in Africa, women who have died in childbirth. In each of these cases, whether intentionally or unintentionally, something is wrong.

In Europe, until recent times, certain Christian sects refused to bury unbaptized children and suicides in 'holy ground', while the blood-guilty were interred at a crossroads with a stake in the heart. The last crossroads burial in England took place outside Lord's cricket ground in 1823. And in 1811, in the neighbourhood of Shoreditch, a corpse was arrested for debt, a survival of

The instinct to proclaim defiance of the transitoriness of human life in this world, and declare that the everlasting quality of our love for someone will survive beyond the grave by erecting a permanent memorial to the dead, is one that is probably as old as humankind: Etruscan sarcophagus in Rome, touchingly recalling the affection that the married couple interred here felt for each other

the procedure whereby the body of a debtor could be legally deprived of a proper burial until his creditors had been repaid.

Love and Fear

The dead are treated in different ways not only for reasons of status, but also as a sanction upon those who remain behind. The earthly system of rewards and punishments is often projected onto the dead, and their destination after death may depend on the way in which they are buried. Only a full burial will ensure proper despatch to the other world; a partial performance may mean that the dead man becomes not a sanctified ancestor but an unsanctified ghost hanging around his earthly dwelling, haunting those who survive in an attempt to get his grievances put right.

The attempt to put oneself at a distance from the ghost is a constant theme of funeral customs everywhere. It is the task of the living to set the dead on the path to the other world, the last journey from which there is no return. For this purpose, the dead may be provided (as in rural Greece) with a coin for the ferryman who rows them across the river of death, with food to sustain them on the way, and with property to use when they get there. This property may include slaves, slaughtered on the tomb, or wives, burnt on the funeral pyre, or the more humble possessions of the deceased, his clothes, his weapons or his drinking vessels.

The general trend towards actions of this kind, which are implicit in the body-soul division, is illustrated by a report from Lincolnshire at the turn of the century. A widow had placed her husband's mug and jug on his grave, having first broken them both. Explaining her actions to the rector, she said, 'I was that moidered with crying that I clean forgot to put 'em in t'coffin . . . So I goes and does t'next best. I deads 'em both over his grave, and says I to mysen.

The Bishop Orders His Tomb

And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
 With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:
 — Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
 Shrewd was the snatch from out the corner South
 He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
 Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
 One sees the pulpit o' the epistle side,
 And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
 And up into the aery dome where live
 The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk:
 And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
 And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,

With those nine columns round me, two and two,
 The odd one at my feet . . .
 Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe
 As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse
 — Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
 Put me where I may look at him! . . .
 And then how I shall lie through centuries,
 And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
 And see God made and eaten all day long,
 And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
 Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke! . . .

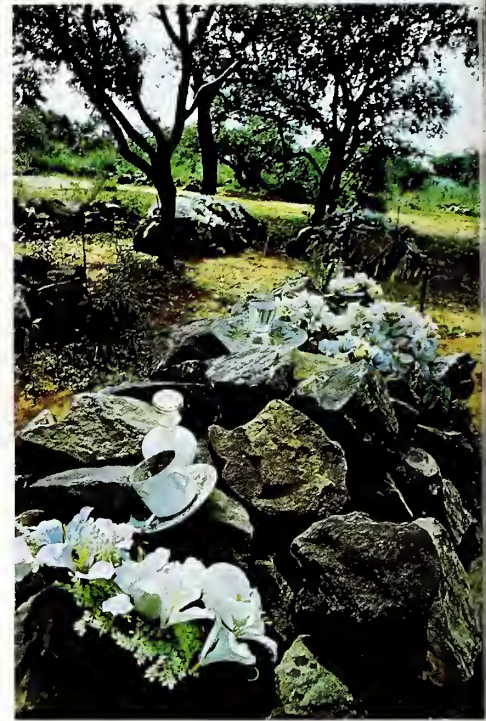
Robert Browning

The Bishop Orders His Tomb in St Praxed's Church

my old man, he set a vast of store, he did, by yon mug and jug, and when their ghoastes gets over on yon side he'll holler out, "Yon's mine, hand 'em over to me," and I'd like to see them as would stop him a-having of them an' all.'

In simpler hunting societies such as those of North America, where the social investment in property was small, a man's possessions were usually destroyed after his death. As the accumulation of capital goods becomes a more prominent feature of society, so grave goods become more nominal, tokens and toys being substituted for the real thing. Eventually expenditure on the dead is seen as neglect of the living, and strong efforts are made to cut down on such 'unnecessary' expenses.

The destruction of a man's property provides a clear instance of the double attitude that lies behind many aspects of funeral ceremonies. Sidney Hartland commented (in his article on 'Death and Disposal of the Dead' in *Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*): 'Throughout the rites and observances attendant on death, two motives — two principles — are found struggling for the mastery. On the one hand, there is the fear of death and of the dead, which produces the horror of the corpse, the fear of defilement, and the overlapping desire to ban the ghost. On the other hand, there is the affection, real or simulated, for the deceased, which bewails his departure and is unwilling to let him go.' The corpse is thus both loved and feared.



Above Grave in Botswana, southern Africa, with flowers, cup and saucer and other objects which are modern descendants of the offerings made all over the world to show love and respect for the dead, and at the same time to placate an angry ghost. Below Funeral procession with wreaths and mourners in Sicily, a survival of the twin attempts to honour the dead and formally cut him off from the world.





No moment in most people's lives attracts the ceremonial with which they are honoured after death. Roman Catholic countries have retained elaborate funeral customs, including the solemn and sinister horse-drawn hearse (left). Protestant burials (right) have generally become simpler, though in the United States there has been a return to embalming and the monumental style of ancient Egypt

To take a cue from Freud, the double-edged attitude towards the dead, seen in so many funeral customs, is a projection of the love and hate that mark the relations we have with our nearest and dearest. Significantly it is often the closest kin, the dead man's heirs and widow, who are seen as being in the greatest danger from the ghost; it is they who have to be provided with the strongest protection from his revenging spirit. So it is they too who often have to undergo the severest ordeals during the course of these ceremonies, since they are the ones who have most to gain (and most to lose) from his death.

The funeral ceremony is not only a matter of disposing of the dead and despatching him to the other world, but also of filling his place in the land of the living and redistributing his rights and duties over people and property.

The transition from life to death is the major 'rite of passage' through which all must go, and the great change in status from living to dead cannot be performed just with a nod of the head. The process has to be a gradual one and the burial service is customarily followed, at a suitably discreet interval, by a second funeral, an obituary service, in which the close kin are released from mourning, the dead are despatched to their final abode, and their life on earth is summed up in what is the equivalent of a funeral oration.

Reaction to death mellows in the course of the funeral and one of the functions of such ceremonies is to relieve the bereaved of

anxiety and grief, as well as to reconcile the community to the loss of one of their number, for death constitutes a distinct threat to those who remain behind. But such a threat can never be totally set aside. The idea of continuity after death is itself an aspect of the refusal to accept the reality of death. So too perhaps is the idea that death, except for the old, is 'unnatural'. In most pre-industrial societies a specific supernatural cause was assigned for every event. Hence the frequent ordeals, centring upon the corpse, that occurred during the funerals, in an attempt to find out who killed the dead man. In one form or another, accusations of witchcraft or of sins against the supernatural powers were a constant accompaniment to funerals.

The Loss of Eternal Life

One striking illustration of this attempt to reject its inevitability is to be found in the tales of the origin of death. The biblical story of Adam, Eve and the apple has its parallels in other stories that attribute the coming of death to man's disobedience. But often what is remarkable is the triviality of the offence man has committed. Another set of stories, found in all parts of the world, contrasts the mortality of man and the waxing and waning of the moon. In one version God sends messengers to convey the news of immortality to man, and of death to the moon; the message to man gets delayed or reversed, with the result that he loses the gift of eternal life. But the manner in which this was lost is almost accidental,

rather than a matter of deliberate planning. It is as if the chance introduction of death left open the possibility that the present state of affairs could be reversed.

It is doubtful if, in any society, men have placed much hope in such an outcome or much weight on tales of this kind. If an explanation of death was required, to meet the enquiries of children or the fears of the old, then these stories were ready to hand. In their actions, as distinct from their formal 'beliefs', most people display a more practical attitude towards death. It is the elaborate funeral ceremonies that enable small face-to-face communities to meet the shock that the loss of a member inevitably brings. In our more impersonal society, the impact of death (unless of a national figure) is very localized; even close kin are shielded from immediate contact by specialist undertakers. But in simpler societies, funerals are often the most elaborate ceremonies in the whole ritual calendar, the occasions on which a community gets together to dispose of the dead, redistribute his roles and property, and at the same time set its fears at rest by demonstrating the solidarity of the living in the face of loss and bereavement.

(See also CREMATION; CULT OF THE DEAD.)

JACK GOODY

FURTHER READING: E. Bendann, *Death Customs* (Humanities, 1970); Jack Goody, *Death, Property and the Ancestors* (Stanford University Press, 1962); Barbara Jones, *Design for Death* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1967).

Burning

Cremation ranks second, in antiquity and popularity, only to earth burial as a way of disposing of the dead: burning an animal was a way of offering it to a god, the rising smell and smoke being thought to carry the essence of the beast up to the god: the belief that burning a substance releases its 'soul' or 'essence' is found in alchemy: in Europe heretics and witches were burned to death. See CREMATION; FIRE; SACRIFICE; SUTTEE.



They have been called 'the harmless people' but this has not protected them against the injuries inflicted by civilisation, or against the harm they fear from natural forces and ghosts

BUSHMEN

ONLY A FEW THOUSAND Bushmen today continue to live as their ancestors lived in South Africa. Less than two centuries ago their people were ruthlessly killed off by the Dutch, and within living memory European settlers used to hunt down the 'wild' Bushmen, his women and children, as though they were game. Their numbers have been further reduced by many tribesmen leaving their old hunting grounds to become 'tamed' by working for white settlers. The remaining representatives of the Bushman race are mostly found in the Kalahari Desert in the south-west.

To understand Bushman beliefs, with their emphasis on Nature worship, magic and taboo, we must take into account that the Bushmen are a Stone Age people, in terms of their intellectual and cultural development. They have no written language, no codified laws or system of government, no agriculture and no settled communities.

Until they came into contact with Europeans, the Bushmen lived almost exactly the same sort of life that primitive men lived thousands of years ago. They wore no clothes except a pouch to cover their genitals and, occasionally, a cloak of animal skins. Wholly nomadic, they existed by hunting and root-gathering. Their needs were so simple that their language was, and is, extremely rudimentary, not far removed in sound from the utterances of animals – the so-called 'Click' language which early travellers likened to the clucking of turkeys. Understandably, their intellectual potential was limited to an awareness of basic natural phenomena, leading to a reverence for the life-giving rain, for rivers and harmless animals, and a dread of storms, drought and the fiercer wild beasts.

This aboriginal African race has only vague ideas of religion and no organized form of worship. They see the world around them as divided into forces of good and evil, and they do what they can to show their

gratitude to the former and to placate the latter. Incapable of building temples or even of making idols, they pay homage to the spirit world by means of dances, music and incantations. They rely on myths for an interpretation of such phenomena as birth, death, the origin of the world, the nature of an afterlife, and the role of the supernatural in the affairs of men.

The Great Captain

Some tribes speak of a god called Tsui-Goab who is a combination of legendary super-chief, folk hero and lord of the skies. But Bushmen do not worship or pray to him or any other deity in a formal manner, for they have nothing resembling a temple or shrine. The nearest they come to a concept of God in the Christian sense is their vague belief in a 'Lord', or 'Great Captain' who is bigger and stronger than any mortal man and who lives in a two-storey house in the sky. The Captain, his wife and his numerous children live on the ground floor of this mansion while the upper storey is occupied by the souls of the dead. The Captain's house appears to be a glorified version of the Bushman's hut, and his diet is a banquet of the Bushman's favourite food – honey, locusts, bluebottles, butterflies and ant eggs. The souls of the dead do nothing and eat nothing, which implies that this divine chieftain has no particular interest in mere mortals.

More powerful in some Bushmen's eyes is Gaunab, the equivalent of the Devil, the embodiment of evil responsible for all the calamities that afflict mankind, including storms, thunderbolts, lightning and drought. To people whose day-to-day existence is constantly threatened by sudden danger, the forces of evil are bound to seem stronger than those of good, and this is why so many Bushman religious beliefs strike Western observers as vague and inconsistent. Much more important to men who live so close to Nature are the realities of their daily life. Rain is undoubtedly their principal concern and most of their rites and ceremonies are conducted to placate the rain spirit.

Walling up a Ghost

Living in a state of constant watchfulness, particularly at night, Bushmen are more aware of ghosts than they are of gods, and the ghosts of dead people are closer to them than some deity who lives far away in the

sky. The reason for this is that primitive people do not accept the Western concept of death as an ending of life due to known causes. In their view, a person does not die, but is spirited away in mysterious and sometimes sinister circumstances. The one who has thus gone remains somewhere in the offing as a ghost. He might have died because malignant spirits entered his body and made him sick; or sorcerers might have carried him off by magical spells. Even a very old man refuses to believe that death is inevitable in the course of Nature: he will argue that he has enemies who will bewitch him with their powerful medicine. In a curious way he may be right, since his actual fate, when he is too old and decrepit to hunt, could well be to be abandoned, to die ultimately of starvation or as the prey of wild beasts.

The graves of dead Bushmen show this fear of ghosts, for they try to make sure that the deceased's spirit does not come forth to harm them by placing heavy stones on the corpse and then piling up a mound over the grave. And in order to protect themselves from supernatural spirits, whether of dead people or of hostile gods like Gaunab, the Bushmen have their magicians and witch-doctors, like every other pagan group in Africa. Some magicians are men, some women. Some are benefactors, others malefactors. All have special powers, perhaps to make rain, perhaps to control the movement of animals, perhaps to cure the sick.

Messages from Bones

Bushman witch-doctors are individuals recognized as having heightened powers of perception, who become the principal social and medical advisers of the group. They are, among other things, soothsayers and can predict such things as the weather or the probable success or failure of a hunting expedition. In addition, every Bushman acts as his own soothsayer by means of his 'bones', or fragments of animal bone marked with special signs. He consults them on every important occasion and 'reads' them according to fixed laws that are based on their positions and conjunctions.

The Bushmen of southern Africa have preserved the religious beliefs of the Stone Age. A Bushman in trance, communicating with spirits (above) and a ritual dance round a fire (below)



Jürgen Schadeberg



Jürgen Schadeberg

Bushmen

Important functions of the magician are to make rain, to ensure a plentiful supply of game for the hunters, to protect the group from evil spirits. Some magicians specialize in various traditional cures, based largely on herbs and a primitive form of blood-letting. Naturally their medicine is of a very simple kind but they cope with a great many diseases by massage, herbal compresses and a process of extracting the 'evil medicine' by sucking the part affected and spitting out the poison or foreign body which is causing the sickness.

The Bushman's knowledge of the properties of herbs, natural salves and lotions is sometimes surprising, as is shown by their use of urine as a sterilising agent. Urine is, in fact, virtually bacteria-free and has been used in the West as a disinfectant in battlefield conditions. This treatment, as used by the Bushmen, was first described by a Dutchman, Johannes Gulielmus de Grevenbrok, in 1695:

A very frequent remedy is to turn the patient on his back and on his front and make water on him. They do not allow even his face to escape a bath of urine. Some even take a sea-shell or tortoise-shell, fill it with water discharged by one man, mix it with a powder from a certain plant, and administer it to the sick man. They do not attach any healing property to the water of women; the women themselves think it injurious to them.

To what extent a magical element is present in this type of doctoring is difficult to say. Certainly neither the Bushmen nor their relations, the Hottentots, indulge in as much mumbo-jumbo and fetishism as the Bantu and the Negroes of Equatorial Africa.

Puberty Rites

One of the principal duties of the magician is to preside over the puberty ceremonies. For the boys, the initiation consists of living in isolation in a special camp for about a month. During the first few days they are roughly handled by the magician and half-starved: their only food is a little water and raw roots or berries. After the first few days of hardship, the boys are allowed to dance the tribal dances, wearing ostrich feathers and the beaks of white storks. On one of the nights of the dance, a female demon called Hishe appears in their midst and is driven away by the magician. Hishe is variously

described as an old hag; a small creature with red eyes, wings and claws; a lion walking upright; or a hermaphrodite. She is obviously a hobgoblin invented by the magicians to frighten the boys during initiation, for if they overcome their fear, they are considered to be men. Similarly the initiates are given a hunting test when each lad is required to show his skill in stalking and shooting an animal. Those who pass these tests are branded by the magician, who cuts the boys between the eyebrows and shoulder-blades with incisions about half an inch long. This cicatrization ends the rites and announces that the boy has become a man, with a man's rights and responsibilities.

Among one group in the eastern Kalahari, coming of age involves circumcision. The boys are operated on at the age of 12, being brought forward one by one to the medicine-man who pulls the boy's foreskin as far over the glans as possible before cutting it off with one slash of a ceremonial stone knife. The boys are given two or three weeks' convalescence, for the operation is a very severe one. Many of the boys faint, some have been known to die from loss of blood, but none cry out, as this is considered unmanly.

The same aura of magic surrounds the puberty rites prescribed for the girls. The ceremony begins with the first menstruation, when the girl is in a state of taboo. She is shut up in a tiny hut and is seen only by her mother until her menstrual flow ceases. The severest penalties attach to a man who sees a girl at this time and there are many legends recounting how a man who looked on a girl during her first period was transformed into a stone. For her part, a girl who was foolish enough to defy the taboo might find herself turned into a frog. Once her puberty rites are ended, however, a feast is held in her honour. The feast is followed by a dance of all the women and girls of the clan, with only two of the older men present.

As soon as a wife is pregnant, she is again in a state of taboo. She may not eat certain foods; no one may pass behind her back; and no man may be present at the birth. In the case of the first child, delivery is in a hut, under the floor of which the afterbirth is carefully buried in case some magician should use it to bewitch the mother or her child. For subsequent births, the woman simply goes to a secluded place, has her baby, and returns to the camp.

Twin births are considered unlucky, and one of the infants, usually the girl, is buried alive, though it is doubtful whether this practice still continues. The justification for it was based on the difficulty of a woman carrying two babies on the march, let alone suckling them both.

The Painted Rocks

The Bushmen have a large body of folklore and myths, mainly about the heavenly bodies and animals. Some of the stars and planets are regarded as semi-divine, and there is considerable evidence of moon worship.

Supernatural properties are attributed to certain animals and insects, notably the mantis which no Bushman would kill. The mantis is the central character of a great many Bushman legends and is endowed with human attributes, including the power of speech. He has his favourite animals, especially the eland, the cow antelope and the gemsbok, or South African antelope, which he protects on behalf of the hunters. The mantis is regarded as the Bushman's best friend in the animal world.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Bushman culture is their skill as artists. The rocks all over South Africa are covered with their paintings, many of which belong in the front rank of prehistoric art. Some anthropologists interpret these pictures as mystical in origin and purpose—a manifestation of a fertility cult or of sympathetic magic. According to this theory, the artist drew the portrait of those animals the hunters wished to kill. Other students of Bushman art prefer the simpler explanation that these paintings, some of them obviously of raids by Negro tribes from the north, were simply records of historical events.

The whole subject of Bushman art remains something of a mystery, for some paintings are undoubtedly many thousands of years old while others are quite recent, only ending with the arrival of the white men. Today, Bushmen have lost all skill and desire to paint the rocks and they cannot even interpret the work of their ancestors.

JAMES WELLARD

FURTHER READING: R.B. Lee and I. DeVore, eds., *Kalahari Hunter-Gatherers* (Harvard University Press, 1976); E. Thomas, *The Harmless People* (Knopf, 1959); A. Wannenburgh, *The Bushmen* (Smith Pubs., 1980).

Butterfly

Symbol of the soul and of attraction to the light: in Europe, North America and the Pacific it was widely believed that the soul has the form of a butterfly, which gave the creature uncanny and sometimes ominous connotations; in northern Europe to see one flying at night was a warning of death, and some said that the soul-butterfly's ability to leave the body in sleep accounts for dreams; medieval angels were sometimes depicted with butterfly's wings and fairies are often shown with them.

See INSECTS.



Buzzard

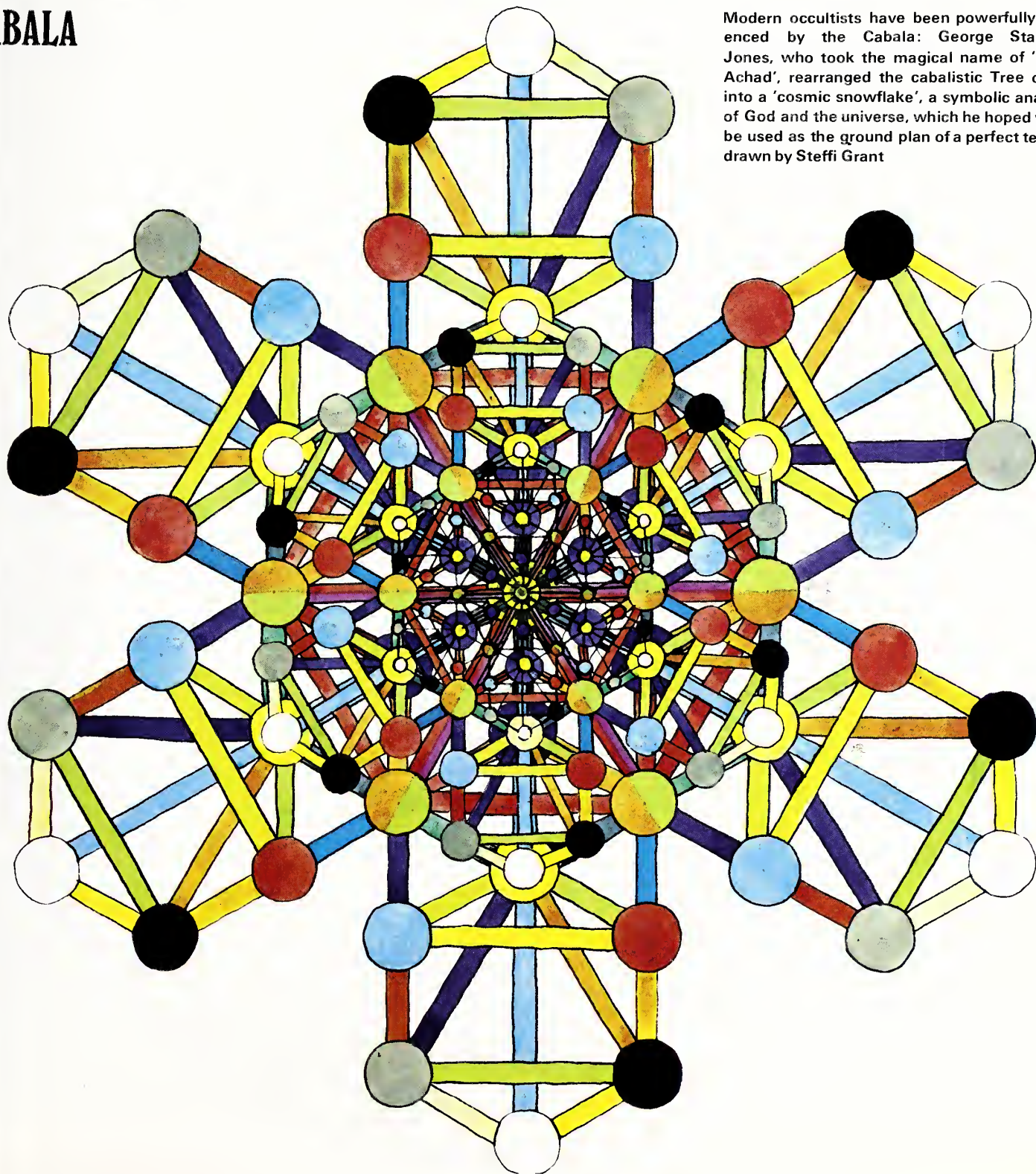
Scavenger bird, associated in much mythology with cleanliness and so with curative powers; Pueblo Indians used its feathers in curing rituals, and to 'sweep away' evil; American superstition says a buzzard feather worn behind the ear will prevent rheumatism, buzzard grease will cure smallpox; also associated with death in the Old South, where beliefs say that witches sometimes take buzzard form, and that a buzzard shadow will do harm if it passes over you.

See BIRDS.



CABALA

Modern occultists have been powerfully influenced by the Cabala: George Stansfeld Jones, who took the magical name of 'Frater Achad', rearranged the cabalistic Tree of Life into a 'cosmic snowflake', a symbolic anatomy of God and the universe, which he hoped would be used as the ground plan of a perfect temple: drawn by Steffi Grant



Eventually used as a term for almost 'any mixture of occultism, Hermetism, Rosicrucianism, exotic theosophy and general infatuation with secret lore', the Cabala was originally a body of Jewish doctrines about the nature of God and the vital role of man in God's universe

THE CABALA, strictly speaking, is a system of Jewish mystical thought which originated in southern France and Spain in the 12th and 13th centuries. Yet even for the founders and early masters of this school, Cabala was but one among many terms (true knowledge, inner knowledge, knowledge of the mysteries, hidden wisdom) used to designate their secret lore, and it was only later that Cabala became the term generally used. Later the

word was used for Jewish mysticism and occultism in general, and later still Christian Cabalists gave it an even wider meaning.

Cabala or Cabbala or Qabalah are among the English spellings of a Hebrew word whose more correct transliteration is Kabbalah and whose meaning is 'receiving' or 'that which is received'. By the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, the word had the technical sense of 'tradition', and especially of tradition handed down by word of mouth, as

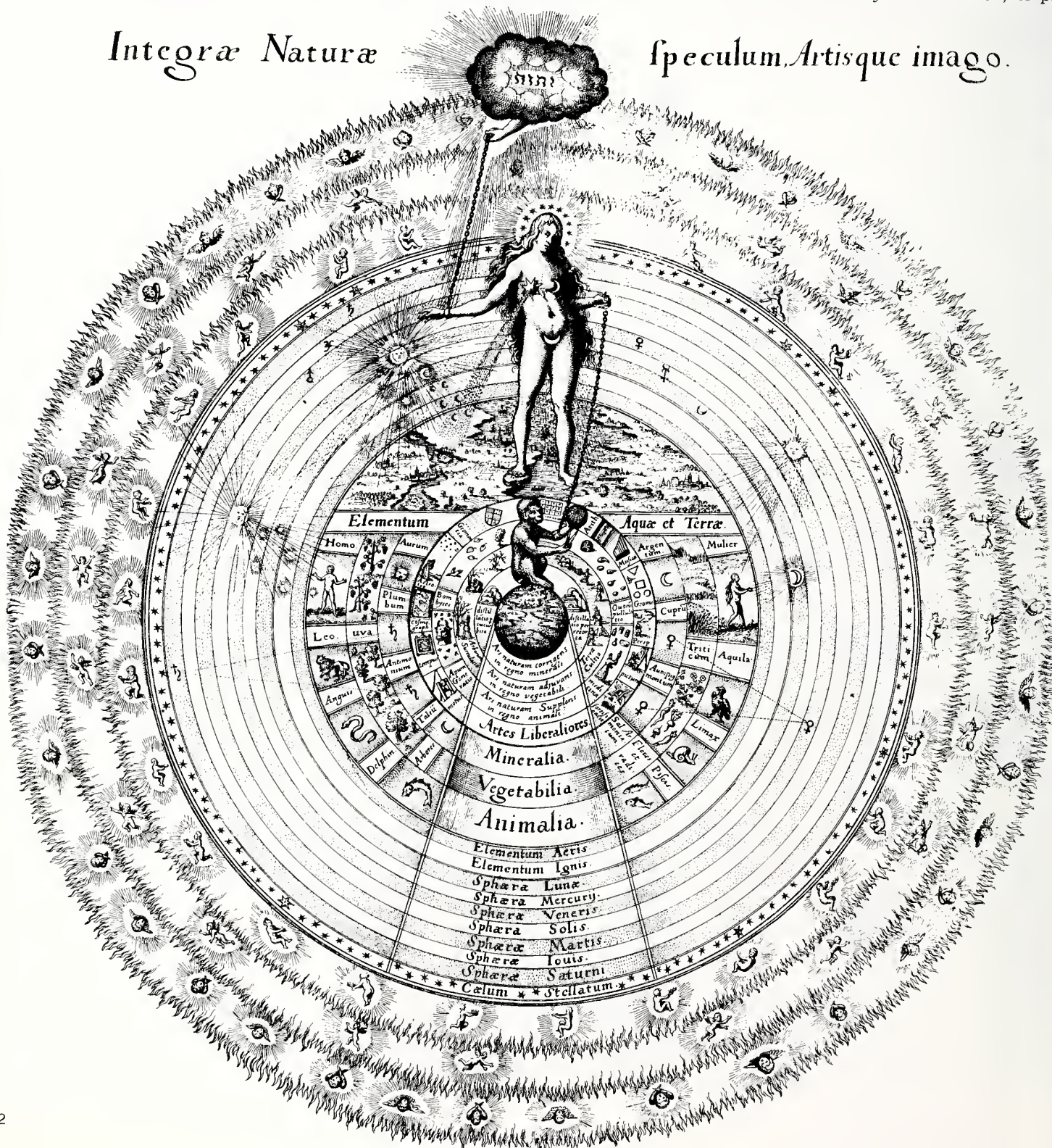
The Cabala's central doctrine deals with the unfolding of the hidden and unknowable God into the 'fullness' of the manifest God, known by his works. A diagram of the universe by the 17th century author Robert Fludd, with the links between the hidden God and the world

distinct from the written Scriptures. At the date it still had no 'secret' or mystical connotations but referred to acknowledged legal, ceremonial and religious traditions.

The origins of Jewish mysticism are obscure. Many of the prophetic, visionary or apocalyptic passages in the Old Testament played a considerable role in subsequent mystical lore (see DANIEL; EZEKIEL) but there is no justification for viewing these as part of a continuous mystical or esoteric (hidden or secret) tradition. The earliest fully articulated mystical system that is accessible to the historian of Judaism is the Merkabah or 'throne' mysticism (see THRONE) that flourished from the 4th to the 10th centuries in Palestine and Babylonia. No doubt this mystical tradition, or part

Integræ Naturæ

Speculum Artis que imago.



if it, goes back to the early Rabbinic period (2nd to 3rd centuries), and beyond that to still earlier currents and trends. The Mediterranean world of late antiquity with its mingling of Gnosticism, Neoplatonism, magic and speculations about angels, demons and divine powers, created a climate in which mystical lore could develop.

Some Jewish writings which were not included in the Old Testament (the *Book of Enoch*, for example, and the *Testaments of the Patriarchs*) suggest the existence of groups which cultivated esoteric doctrines and mystical disciplines. In the 1st century AD the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria describes in his *De Vita Contemplativa* a Jewish sect leading a contemplative and semi-monastic life. There is evidence that the Essenes, held by most scholars to be identical with the Dead Sea or Qumran sect whose writings were found in and since 1948 near Jericho (see DEAD SEA SCROLLS), possessed a secret lore. It seems to have consisted mainly of angelology and magic, and there is no reason to assume any continuity of Essene doctrines and the forms of mysticism cultivated in rabbinic and other circles.

At any rate, the Mishna (a 2nd century rabbinic collection of religious law) attests the existence of two subjects that should not be taught in public and which, therefore, were considered as esoteric disciplines intended for initiates only. These subjects were 'the work of creation' (based on Genesis, chapter 1) and 'the work of the chariot' (the mysteries of the Divine Throne, based on Ezekiel, chapter 1). The precise nature and contents of these mystical disciplines is a matter for conjecture but it seems certain that some of the early rabbis practised an ecstatic contemplation which culminated in the vision of the Throne of Glory, the Merkabah.

In the later *Hekhaloth* texts, the ascent of the soul to heaven and the 'perils of the soul' encountered during these ascents are described realistically and convincingly enough. Like all forms of mysticism involving the rising of the soul to heaven, Merkabah mysticism ramifies into theories about the structure of the universe, because the ascent takes place in a spatially conceived cosmos, divided into higher and lower worlds, spheres and heavenly palaces; into angelology and demonology, because the various cosmic spheres had their angelic guardians and powers; and into magic, because the adept had to use special words and mystic signs to force his passage and subdue the angelic or demonic powers barring his progress. Esoteric speculations and ecstatic experiences of this kind were probably tinged with Gnostic elements (see GNOSTICISM). They were viewed with misgivings and suspected of being apt to lead weaker spirits into heresy.

The characteristic feature of Merkabah mysticism was its emphasis on the transcendent, mysteriously awesome and truly numinous aspect of the deity. The experience of loving communion with God, so common in later mysticism, is absent here. The initiate rises through spheres, worlds, heavens and celestial mansions or 'palaces' (*hekhaloth*) guarded by all sorts of terrifying

angelic beings until at last, if he be worthy, he stands in awe and trembling before the supreme vision of the Divine Splendour.

Creation and Splendour

The *Sefer Yetsirah* or 'Book of Creation' which was written at some time between the 3rd and 6th centuries in Palestine or Babylonia, and which came to enjoy great prestige in the subsequent history of Jewish mysticism, stands completely outside the Merkabah tradition. Its theory of the universe derives the world from 32 elements, which are the first ten numbers and the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The book is obscure, perhaps deliberately, but its doctrine of ten *sefirot* (which here means numbers) and its emphasis on letter mysticism clearly influenced the later Cabala. All reality is a reality of the letters, which are the ultimate elements of which the cosmos is constructed. This conception easily links on the one hand with the cabalistic doctrine of the cosmic process as an unfolding of the mystical name of God (that is, of the Hebrew letters constituting his name), and on the other hand with the theory and practice of magic which seeks to manipulate reality by means of these letters (see ALPHABET).

From Palestine and Babylonia some of these esoteric and magical texts and traditions spread to the Jews of Spain, Italy and France, and led to the formation of the German 'Hasidism' which flourished in the 12th and 13th centuries. The mysticism of the German Hasidism was a mixture of parts of the Merkabah tradition (but without its ecstatic practice), magical elements, ideas derived from the *Sefer Yetsirah*, and philosophical doctrines. The practical emphasis was on piety, humility and self-effacement, on penitential and ascetic discipline, and on the practice of devotional contemplation — particularly at prayer — in the form of meditation on the Hebrew letters and their numerical values. In due course German Hasidism merged with the new Cabala that developed in the 12th and 13th centuries, at first in Provence, in southern France, and subsequently also in northern Spain.

It is precisely this new system of mystical theosophy (or 'knowledge of God'), and its continuation into the 16th century and beyond, which constitutes the Cabala in the strict sense of the term. Its origins still need further clarification, for it is evident that many different influences coalesced in its emergence: Gnostic and Merkabah traditions, elements deriving from other oriental sources, and philosophical theories of various kinds.

It is a curious fact that the Cabala should have developed in the same area and at the same time that saw the flowering of Provençal culture and the sudden and violent efflorescence of the Cathar heresy (see CATHARS). There is no reason to doubt the existence of cultural contacts but there are few, if any, definite and specific similarities. Cabalists and Cathars can both be said to have held Gnostic doctrines, but there is nothing to suggest either a common source or direct influence of one movement on the other.

The principal work of Spanish Cabala, the *Zohar* or 'Book of Splendour' was written in the years after 1280 AD. The *Zohar* draws on many of the cabalistic doctrines and traditions which had evolved by them, but there is no reason to consider it the work of an 'editor' who merely combined ancient sources or texts. The author, Moses de Leon of Guadalajara, wrote the work in a peculiar imitation-Aramaic. The *Zohar* in due course became the classical main text for the Cabalists. Subsequent cabalistic works, whether expounding similar or different doctrines, could not affect the prestige and central position of the *Zohar*. Even the completely new cabalistic system evolved by Isaac Luria in the 16th century pretended to be a profounder interpretation of the mysteries of the *Zohar*.

The Abyss of Nothingness

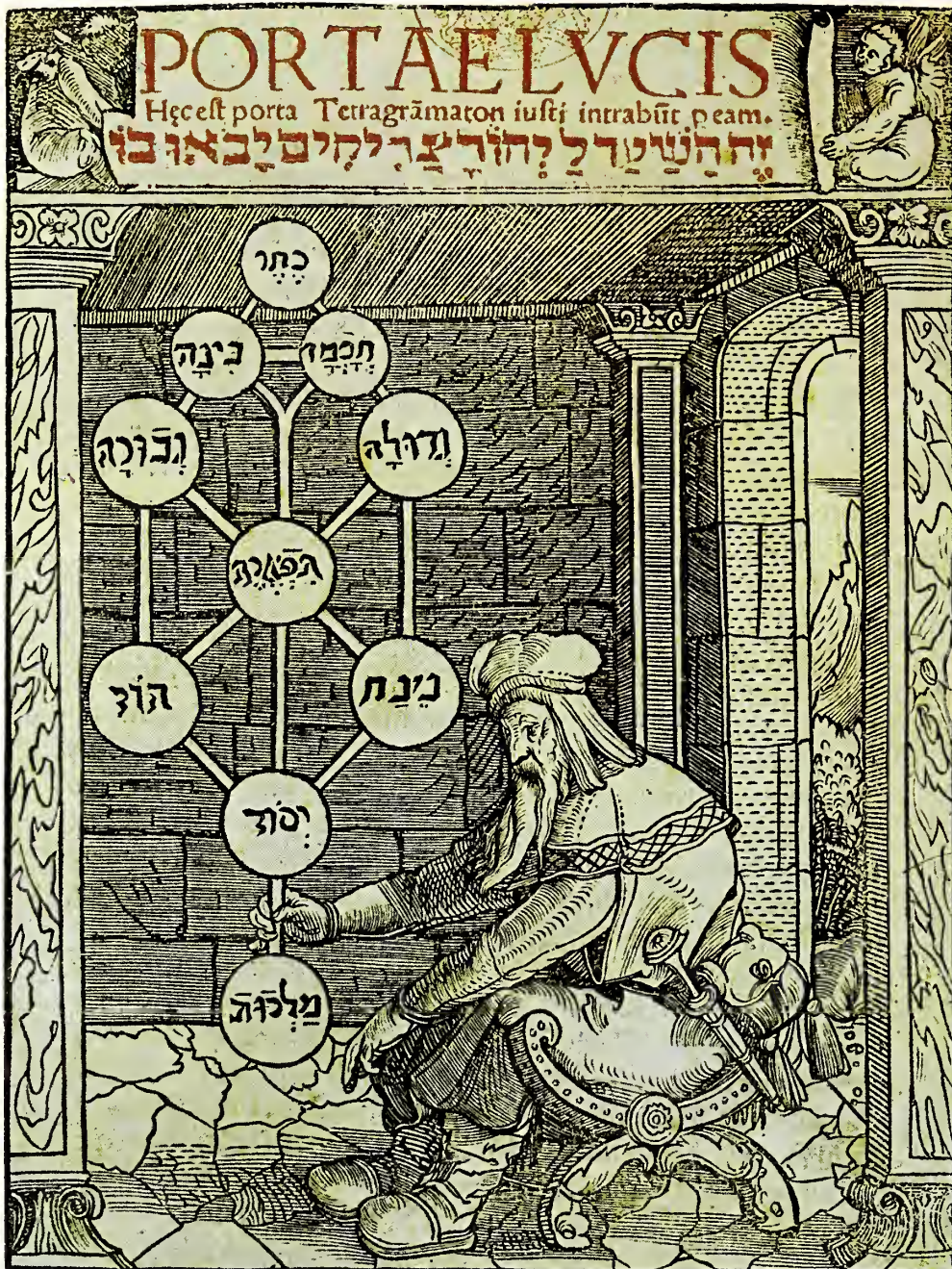
The backbone of the cabalistic system is its doctrine of the deity, which distinguishes between the inaccessible and unknowable *deus absconditus* (the hidden god) on the one hand, and the self-revealing dynamic God of religious experience on the other. Of the former not even existence can be predicted. He, or rather 'It', is the paradoxical fullness of the great divine Nothing. The Cabalists called it *En Sof*, literally the 'infinite'.

En Sof is so hidden in the abyss of its Nothingness that it is not even mentioned in the Bible, let alone addressed in prayer or accessible in contemplation. Scripture, God's word, is by definition nothing but the revelation, that is, the self-manifestation, of God. An existing God means a manifest, revealed and related God. The process of manifestation is the process by which God 'comes into being' (at least in the perspective of the being to which he relates).

The text of the Bible, when read superficially, seems to describe the creation of the world and God's first dealings with it, but the Cabalist pierces through this outward layer of meaning to an inner, hidden level which is, to him, the ultimately significant one. What Scripture tells is the process of Divine becoming and of the inner Divine life. For in the depths of the Divine hiddenness, turned in upon itself, there occurs a primordial, initial wrench by which it begins to turn outwards, to unfold, to exist. Here existence is a process of extraversion in the introverted En Sof.

This initial movement is described in a highly mystical passage in the *Zohar* as the concentration or crystallization of energy in one luminous point (or rather a point 'dark with luminosity') which bursts the closed confines of En Sof. The process of 'emanation' has started. Cabalistic writings use the term emanation rather than creation, and where the Bible says 'create' they interpret it in the sense of 'emanate'.

An emanation is something which has 'flowed out' from its source, as distinct from something which has been created, made by a Maker. A theory of emanation from God is a way of providing links between the many different phenomena of the world and the spiritual One, in which all things have their source. But the Cabalists use the theory of emanation not so much for this



The Tree of Life, from *Portae Lucis* (1516) by Paul Ricci, a Jew turned Christian who taught at Pavia University. The ten spheres of the Tree are the sefirot, which are aspects of God, the stages of the process of the hidden God's unfoldment and, to magicians, centres of power which man can grasp and use, as Ricci himself explained in saying that the lore of the Cabala teaches us how 'to attain more easily and beyond the use of Nature to the glories of the Eternal Father and our prerogatives in this world, which resemble them'

purpose but rather to account for the procession of the fullness of the Divine Being from the Hiddenness of the Divine Non-Being or Nothingness.

The Ten Sefirot

The *pleroma* or dynamic 'fullness' of the Life Divine is described as a complex organism consisting of ten emanations, potencies or focal points, called sefirot. These potencies are not ten gods, but ten aspects, stages or manifestations of the Living Deity. The 'World of Emanation' or 'World of the Sefirot' is not the universe but the godhead in its 'existent' aspect. The dynamic interrelation of the ten sefirot pictured in the three lines of the sefirotic Tree (the right side is male, the left female,

and the middle line mediates between them and harmonizes them) make up the dramatic inner-life of the godhead which, in spite of its complexities, is essentially one.

Orthodox critics held the dualism between the hidden and the manifest God, as well as the doctrine of sefirot, to be departures from strict Jewish monotheism. The Cabalists, who had some of the greatest luminaries of orthodox Jewish learning in their camp, replied that they were speaking of a profound mystery, and that the mystical understanding of the Divine Unity was precisely their main concern. In fact, the emphasis on this essential Unity grew more insistent as by the sheer inherent power of the cabalistic symbolism the various sefirot became more and more personified.

The Cabala's picture of the divine totality as an emanated 'fullness' of ten sefirot is reminiscent of the great Gnostic systems of earlier centuries. But whereas the Gnostic *pleroma* or 'fullness', the realm of the divine, consisted of hundreds of divine *aeons* or powers, the cabalistic 'World of the Sefirot' is reduced to a manageable ten. Moreover the Gnostic *aeons* are a rather chaotic and disorderly lot: they ascend and descend in almost anarchic freedom, whereas the cabalistic sefirot are ordered in a strict hierarchy.

The notion of the cosmos as a series of descending emanations from a divine source is a familiar Neoplatonic motif (see NEOPLATONISM). Medieval Arab philosophy was markedly Neoplatonic and there is definite evidence of specific Neoplatonic influences on the early Spanish Cabalists. The classical doctrine of the sefirot is therefore an intriguing combination of Gnostic and Neoplatonic motifs. The cosmos as a hierarchical structure of successive emanations — this is Neoplatonic. But the idea that this emanated cosmos is divine or, to be more exact, constitutes the fullness of the divine realm and that the entities making it up are divine forces, is thoroughly Gnostic.

The Four Worlds

What happens after the tenth sefirah, what are the relations between the Divine Being shown in the sefirotic Tree and the actual universe in which we live? Some Cabalists seem to have thought of further emanations which finally produce our material universe. In that case there would be no break at all but a gradual, imperceptible descent from the godhead into the material world. As against this radical Neoplatonism, other Cabalists tended to hold to the traditional doctrine of creation as a discontinuous act. This could be done by letting the process of emanation stop with the tenth sefirah. God, the complex of sefirot, then proceeds to create the universe out of nothing.

Later cabalistic cosmology spoke of four worlds. These are, in descending order; *Asiluth*, the divine world of the sefirot; *Beriah*, the sub-divine sphere, the world of the Divine Throne and the angels; *Yesirah*, the world of the heavenly spheres down to that of the moon; and finally *Asiyah*, the sub-lunar universe. This fourfold division is prefigured in the realm of the sefirot, since the sefirotic Tree can be divided into four tiers corresponding to the four 'worlds'. The image of the sefirotic realm as a tree already occurs in the first cabalistic text to have survived, the 12th century *Bahir*. The tree is, of course, growing downwards and its roots are above.

While each of the sefirot has a considerable range of symbolism and imagery, some are more important than others. The fifth sefirah, 'Power' or 'Stern Judgement', also appears as the source from which destructive evil and the demonic powers emanate. In fact, the problem of evil and the possibility of its being originally a part, albeit a fallen part, of the divine totality are recurring themes in cabalistic speculation.

Of special importance, however, in cabalistic thinking and practice is the relation

between the sixth sefirah, Tifereth (the 'Beauty', also the 'Compassion' of God) and the tenth sefirah, which is called Malkhuth or Shekhinah. Tifereth is the central sefirah; it functions as the hub and pivot of the whole system. In the dynamic give-and-take of the sefirot, Tifereth receives the power and influx of the higher potencies and, harmonizing them, passes them on to the lower ones. It embodies the creative dynamism of the sefirotic Tree and is conceived exclusively in male symbols: king, sun, bridegroom, heaven. Standing at the lower end of the sefirotic cluster is Malkhuth. As the last of the divine manifestations, it is the point at which the Divine (the world of Asiluth followed, according to the teaching of later Cabalism, by the three lower worlds of Beriah, Yesirah and Asiyyah) contacts the Non-Divine.

Standing at the lowest, receiving end of the system, Malkhuth is the receptive womb, the moon, the bride and the queen. It is only in relation to the lower worlds that Malkhuth, as that aspect of the deity which is nearest to them, acquires active, creative or even ruling characteristics. Then the royal aspect of her Queenship is emphasized and the bride is also the mother.

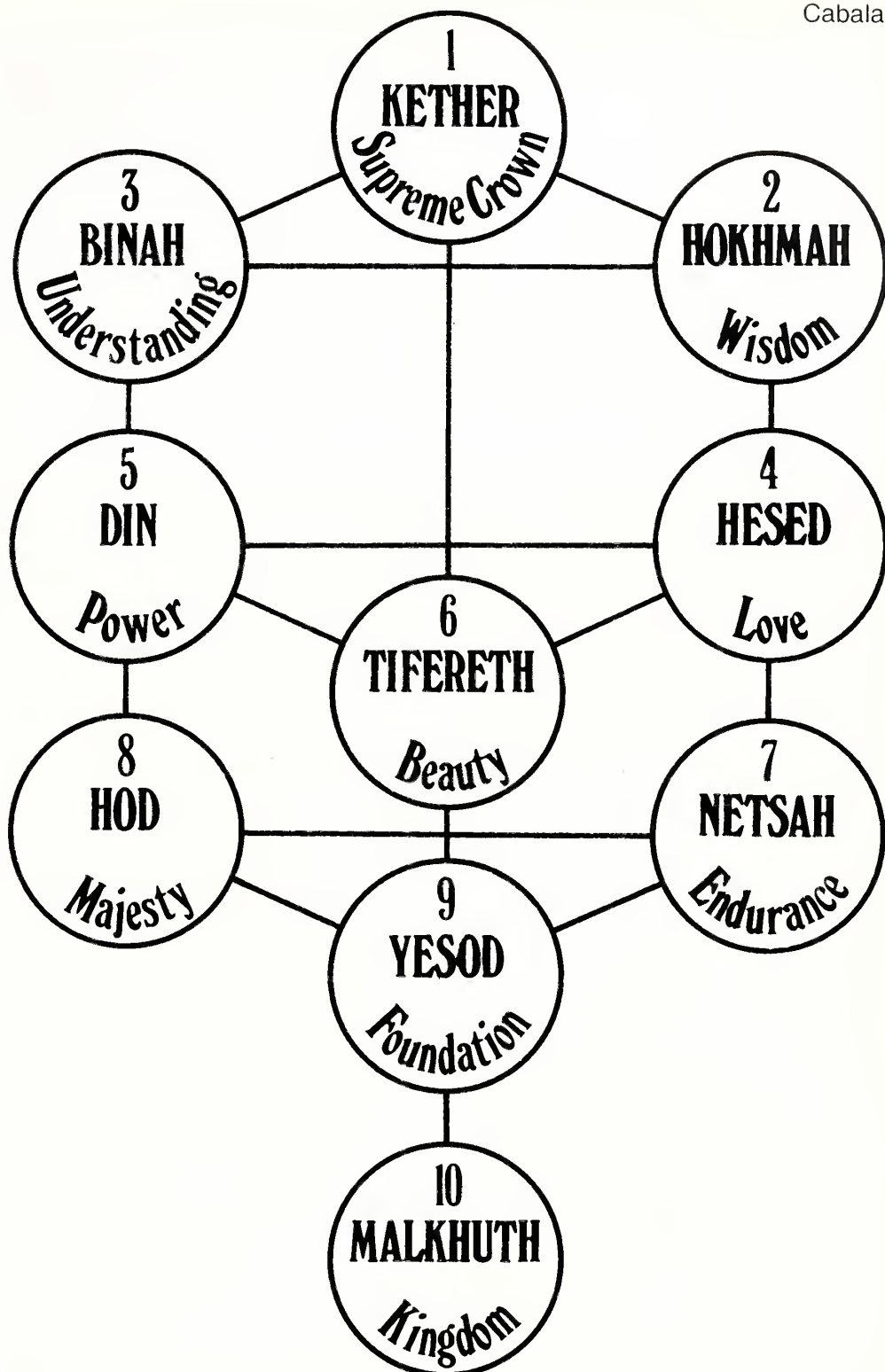
The Sacred Marriage

It is the frankly erotic imagery in the description of the relations between Tifereth and Malkhuth which is one of the most striking features of the cabalistic symbolism of the *Zohar*. The supreme and central mystery of the Cabala is the Holy Union or 'sacred marriage' between the two aspects of the Divine, or in other words the unification of God. The greatest catastrophe that the Cabalist can imagine is the destruction of the unity within the godhead, the separation of the Shekhinah from her husband. This was precisely the tragic consequence of Adam's sin in Eden (see *FIRST MAN*).

It is thus really the fate of God that is at the core of religion, and man's efforts, both in good works and in mystical contemplation, should be directed to the one end of promoting the wholeness of God, the union of male and female within the divine 'fullness'. The gravity of sin is due to man's capacity to disrupt the Divine union; man's greatness consists of his capacity to restore the lost union.

The biblical notion of man as the image of God was thus absorbed into the cabalistic doctrine, according to which the human frame reveals the same structure as the mystical Divine frame of the ten sefirot. Since the tenth sefirah, Shekhinah, is also the mystical archetype of Israel, the sefirotic symbolism could easily absorb the Rabbinic tradition (originally developed by way of commentary on the Song of Solomon) which regarded Israel as God's bride.

An interesting consequence of this symbolism is the relative absence of erotic elements in the mystical life of the individual Cabalists. Erotic symbolism is limited to the sphere of the inner-divine and has little or no place in man's relation with God. The Cabalist knows no lover who ravishes him, and the kind of experiences recorded in Christian and Sufi mystical literature are

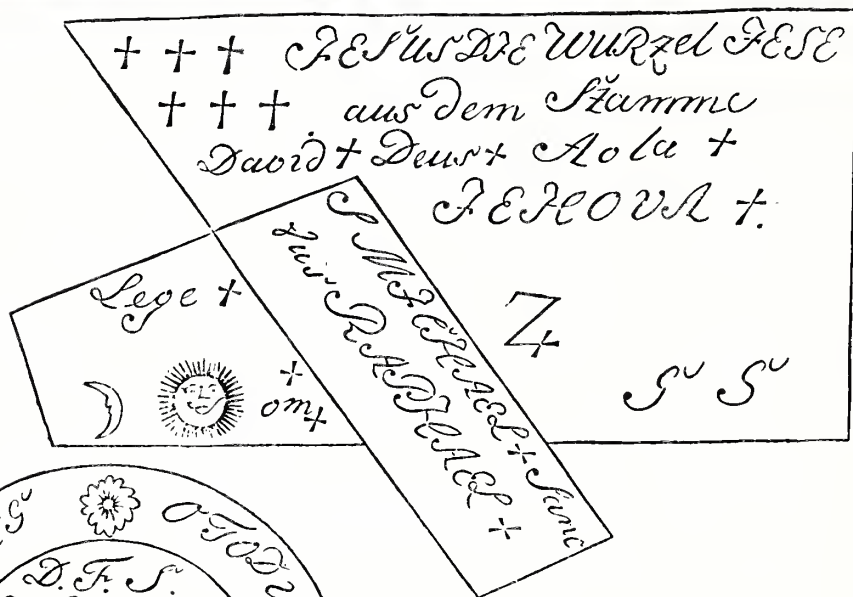
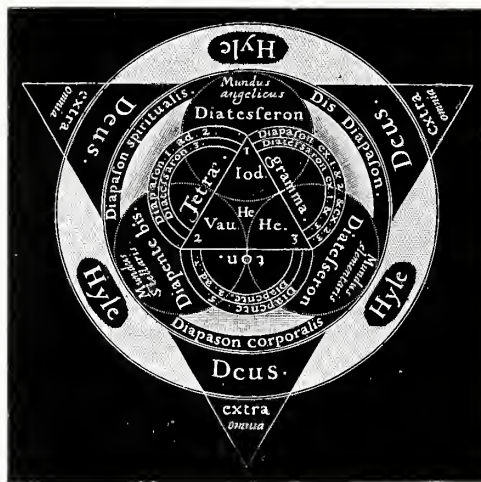
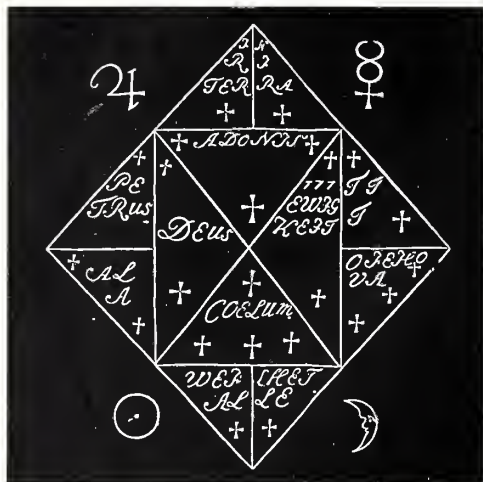


foreign to him. The meditative ascent to the Shekhinah and beyond aims at a communion (and not at mystical union) with God, that would promote the mystical union *within* God. It is Israel's task to promote this end by contemplative efforts and a holy life.

The Breaking of the Vessels

Classical Spanish Cabala was an esoteric doctrine, reserved for an elite of initiates. After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 the religious ferment among the refugees who settled in North Africa, Italy and the eastern Mediterranean, caused the 'Cabala to spread to wider circles and to become the dominant form of popular piety, as regards theological doctrines and devotional (especially ascetic and penitential)

Diagram of the Tree of Life, showing the ten spheres, the emanations through which God revealed himself: 1 Kether, the supreme crown of God, also called Ayin, 'nothing' 2 Hokhmah, the wisdom of God, also 'the father' or Reshith, 'the beginning' 3 Binah, the understanding or intelligence of God, also 'the mother' 4 Hesed, the love or mercy of God 5 Din or Geburah, the power and stern judgement of God 6 Tifereth, the beauty, glory or compassion of God 7 Netsah, the lasting endurance of God 8 Hod, the majesty of God 9 Yesod, the foundation or basis of all active forces in God 10 Malkhuth, the kingdom of God, also called Shekhinah, Israel, the bride of God. The right-hand column headed by Hokhmah is male, the left-hand column is female, and the central pillar balances and unifies them



In magic the cabalistic preoccupation with letters and names of God, as containers of secret knowledge and objects of mystical speculation, turned into the attempt to use them as sources of power. *Top left* Diagram believed to give the magician control of all evil spirits *Top right* The harmony of God, the universe and man, by Robert Fludd. At the centre, Iod He Vau He are the Hebrew letters of the supreme name of God, also called the Tetragrammaton or name of four letters *Below* Hung round the neck before sunrise on a Sunday, these symbols would make the wearer invisible

practice. A major cabalistic renaissance took place in the 16th century in Safed (Upper Galilee) where a group of scholars and mystics, mainly of Spanish origin, had settled. By far the most influential of them was Isaac Luria, whose teachings form a weird and curious mythology of a strangely Gnostic character.

In the beginning God was All in All. In order that creation (which means, that which is not God) might be, God had to empty space by withdrawing or 'retracting' his all-pervading presence. This is the mystery of the *Tsimtsum* ('retraction'). Into this newly created vacuum God wanted to infuse his carefully veiled light, thus bringing into being a created cosmos. But the channels or pipes through which the

creative light-essence of God poured into creation-in-the-making could not contain the Divine light. They collapsed and broke in the *Shevirath ha-kelim*, 'the breaking of the vessels', and the divine sparks fell into chaos, a prey to demonic powers.

Here a Gnostic type of primeval catastrophe or fall is assumed in the very heart of God's creation, even before Adam's fall. Since then the history of the world, including the creation of man, is the drama of the struggle for restoration (*tikkun*) with its ups and downs, its progress and setbacks. The two major setbacks were the fall of Adam and the destruction of the Temple.

The decisive idea at the bottom of the system was that it was not only Israel which was in exile and in need of salvation, but

the whole cosmos. In fact, God himself involved in the fall. Every stone and every plant shelters a fallen divine spark which yearns to return to its origin and, as were, cries out for salvation.

Lurianic Cabala soon became the dominant form of Jewish piety and provided the theological background of the 17th century Messianic movement connected with the person of Sabbatai Zevi. The doctrines of this movement soon developed into a mystical heresy which rendered the Cabala suspect. The 18th century mystical revival initiated by Israel Baal Shem Tov and known as Hasidism encountered violent opposition, partly because it was associated in the eyes of its critics, with the aftermath of the Sabbatian movement and its Cabala.

The Christian Cabala

Under the influence of the Cabala many doctrines and practices established themselves in Judaism which would otherwise have been less influential. Thus the belief in transmigration of souls did not really become an established and widespread doctrine until it was taken up by the Cabala. Medieval Cabala also absorbed much of the earlier magical tradition, part of which was international in character and part of which bore specifically Jewish traits.

Christian interest in the Cabala developed in the 15th century and its beginnings were closely connected with the Neoplatonic tendencies of the Medicean Academy at Florence. This interest was at first specifically Christian, attempting to prove that doctrines about the nature of Christ were the true and secret meaning of the Jewish Cabala. Moreover, it was argued that the Cabala contained the original revelation of mankind, and hence the term came to mean Platonic, Orphic and Pythagorean occultism in general, rather than specific Jewish doctrines as expounded in Hebrew texts.

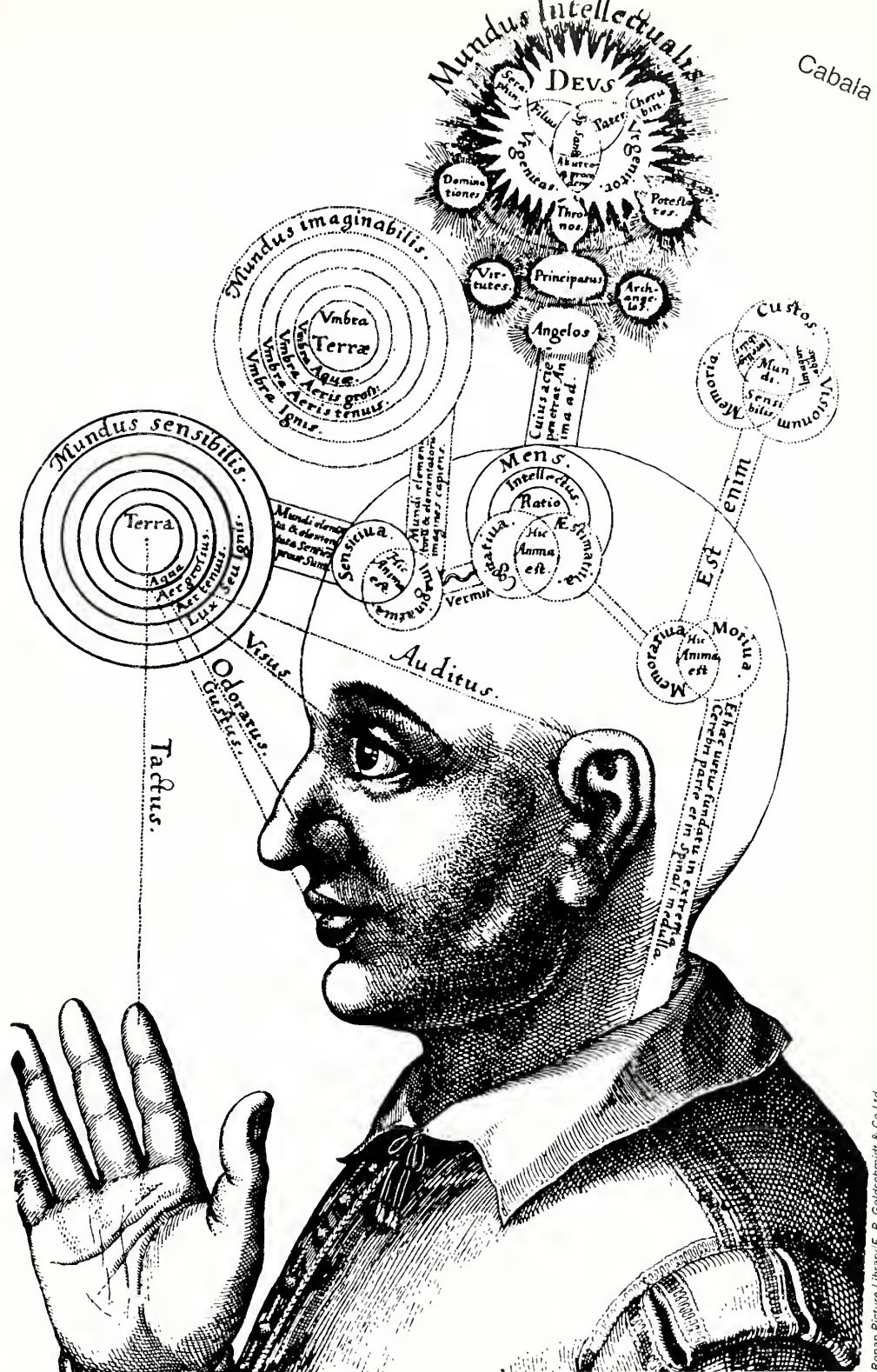
The first generations of Christian Cabalists, often instructed by Jewish teachers, possessed some sound though fragmentary knowledge of the subject (Pico della Mirandola and Reuchlin are examples), but most authors used Latin translations only and not the original texts. From the 17th century onwards, ignorance steadily increased until the term Cabala became a euphemism for any mixture of occultism, Hermeticism, Rosicrucianism, exotic theosophy and general infatuation with secret lore: as illustrated, for example, by W. Wynn Westcott's claim (in his *Introduction to the Study of the Kabbalah*, 1926) to have taught cabalistic doctrines which had never been published before and were not to be found in any Hebrew book.

Another cabalistic trend was in evidence in 17th century England, a combination in different proportions of natural philosophy, alchemy and Neoplatonism in the writings of Thomas Vaughan, Robert Fludd and the Cambridge Platonists, such as Henry More. This Cabala, unlike Jewish esotericism, was essentially a form of natural philosophy which combined what Fludd called 'theosophical and philosophical truths' and for which 'Mosaical Philosophy' and Hermeticism meant the same things. Hence Henry

R. J. ZWIWERBLOWSKY

Cabala and Modern Magic

The 22 major trumps of the Tarot pack are connected with the 22 Paths, which link the sefiroth together and provide mystical pathways along which the magician travels. This travelling is performed not in the ordinary physical body but in the astral body, and there is a complicated system of correspondences which help to guide the magician on his way (see CORRESPONDENCES; PATHS). As he rises through the spheres, the magician masters and controls



the powerful force of each individual sefirah.

This is, in effect, a statement of the magical belief that the adept of the occult arts must experience and master all things in order to achieve supreme perfection and power, for the Tree of the ten sefiroth is believed to be a cosmic diagram, the basic pattern which shows how the universe is arranged and how its phenomena are connected. It is also a statement of the belief that man is a miniature replica of the universe and God, and that he is capable of spiritually expanding himself to become God.

The Cabala, and Jewish magic in general, has also influenced magicians in their use of 'names of power', many of which were originally names or titles of the god of the Old Testament and the gods of the ancient world.

Human mental abilities classified in terms of God and the universe: from Robert Fludd's *Utriusque Cosmi*

These names are believed to be reservoirs of power, which the magician taps by using them.

(See also ALPHABET; GEMATRIA; GRIMOIRES; NAMES.)

FURTHER READING: E. Bischoff, *The Kabbala* (Weiser, 1984); V.M. Firth (pseudonym is Dion Fortune), *The Mystical Qabalah* (Weiser, 1984, c1935); G. Scholem, *The Kabbalah* (Quadrangle, 1974); A.E. Waite, *The Holy Kabbalah* (Citadel Press, 1976, c1929). For the magical side, see W.E. Butler, *Magic and the Qabalah* (Llewellyn Pubns.).

Cactus

The spiny desert plant important in south-western American Indian rituals; among the Pueblos, Zuni chiefs are installed with rites that include whipping with cacti, which ensures good fortune; Zuni Cactus Societies use cactus flagellation to test endurance; Hopis place pieces of cactus at the corners of a new house to 'root' it to the earth; many south-western tribes use hallucinogenic drugs derived from cacti in mystic ceremonies.

See DRUGS; PUEBLO INDIANS.

Whether this 18th-century adventurer was a charlatan or something close to a saint is a question about which his biographers disagree. He claimed to be able to summon up the dead, cure disease and predict the future, and many people in high society believed him. It is possible that beneath his high-flown, theatrical trickery lay genuine psychic gifts

CAGLIOSTRO

TO HIS ENEMIES Cagliostro was an impostor, a fraud and a pimp who prostituted his beautiful wife. To his admirers he was a benevolent genius, possessed of magical powers and profound occult wisdom. A brilliant showman, he moved in a glamorous aura of rumour and mystery. The sources of information about his career are highly unreliable and most writers about him have seen what they wanted to see.

The man who called himself Count Alessandro Cagliostro was born plain Giuseppe Balsamo in Palermo, Sicily, in 1743, the son of an impoverished jeweller. He later took the name of Cagliostro from his godmother, one of his mother's relatives who had married a well-to-do citizen of Messina named Giuseppe Cagliostro. Balsamo always claimed close family connections with Malta and the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, and maintained that it was their Grand Master, a secret Rosicrucian, who first initiated him into esoteric wisdom.

It is known that he married the 15-year-old Lorenza Feliciani in Rome in 1768, and they moved about Europe, living on their wits. Another notorious figure, Giacomo Casanova, met the young couple in Aix-en-Provence, ostensibly having come from making the pilgrimage to the shrine of St James of Compostela in Spain. The 'great lover' was much taken with the lovely Lorenza, but distinctly unenthusiastic about her husband.

Apparently the Balsamos continued to move restlessly about Europe for several years, travelling in Spain, Italy and Germany, and Cagliostro afterwards claimed to have learned occult and alchemical secrets in the Near East. In 1776 the pair arrived in England and settled in London, where Balsamo made a reputation

for successfully predicting winning numbers in the lottery. This naturally attracted a retinue of gamblers, who were joined by sick people and cripples when word spread that the mysterious foreigner had healing powers. There were rumours that he could summon the dead, knew the secret of the Philosopher's Stone (see ALCHEMY) and possessed a powder which conferred eternal youth and cured all diseases.

It was at this stage that Balsamo awarded himself the title of Count Cagliostro, with his wife duly ennobled as Countess Serafina. He also became a Freemason, being ceremoniously admitted to a lodge in the Soho district of London. He may have been sincerely interested in Freemasonry, but it was also a useful way of making important acquaintances and gaining access to high social circles.

The Egyptian Rite

The Cagliostros left London to return to Europe at the end of 1777, travelling for several years in the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, Italy and France. Taking advantage of the current craze for the mystery and magic of Ancient Egypt, Cagliostro concocted an Egyptian Rite of masonry and founded branches as he went, calling himself the Grand Copht, while his wife presided over women's lodges as the Queen of Sheba.

Cagliostro's admirers believe that he was trying to create his own synthesis of Christianity with the secret wisdom of the ancient world, the Cabala, the European tradition of high magic and Freemasonry, decked out with intriguing references to the Knights Templar and the Rosicrucians. If he had genuine psychic and healing abilities, he used them as a foundation for sensationally dramatic performances. He held seances at which, after much mumbo-jumbo, a young boy was apparently put into a trance and spoke with the spirits of the recently dead, or 'screed' in the surface of a jug of water. On one occasion the Archangel Michael was reported to have descended from heaven in a long white robe and kissed the young medium, though he could not actually be seen by the audience because the boy was behind a screen. It was the child who described the archangel's long white robe, but the smacking kiss was noisy enough for the audience to hear it.

Caduceus

Latin word for a herald's staff of office, associated with the Greek god Hermes, the messenger of the gods: in its oldest form possibly an olive branch with two prongs at the top, entwined with ribbons; later it was a wand with two snakes twined round it, and sometimes with wings at the top of the staff; in alchemy a symbol of the uniting of opposites: more generally, it has been interpreted as an emblem of power (the wand) combined with wisdom (the snakes); also used as a symbol of healing.



Sensational cures were reported from St Petersburg, where one of Catherine the Great's ministers had a mad brother restored to sanity by Cagliostro, who expelled from the unfortunate man the demon which was possessing him. In Warsaw one evening, to general astonishment, he burned a piece of paper which everyone present had signed and made it reappear again out of nowhere, with all the signatures intact.

Credulous society figures tumbled over themselves to meet the wonder-worker, and he was received by King Frederick II of Prussia and King Stanislaus Augustus of Poland. It is clear that interest in the occult was reviving, as an appetite for the marvelous and the supernatural sharpened in reaction against the prevailing rationalism of 18th-century intellectuals.

Cagliostro's miraculous cures, for which he refused to accept any payment, and his kindness and charity to the poor won him golden opinions. At the same time, no effort was spared to impress the impressionable. In the Grand Copht's seance room in Paris stood statues of Egyptian deities: Isis, Anubis and Apis, the sacred bull. The servants were rigged out as Egyptian slaves and the walls were covered with hieroglyphs, the sacred writing of Ancient Egypt. The hieroglyphic symbols had not yet been deciphered and they were still widely believed to be charged with secret knowledge and power.

The Queen's Necklace

It is said that in France Cagliostro met the Count of St-Germain, an even more mysterious figure, sometimes identified with the Wandering Jew and reputed to be more than 2000 years old (see ST-GERMAIN). He certainly met and impressed the immensely rich and influential Cardinal de Rohan, who called him to Paris in 1781 to treat the elderly Prince de Soubise, the cardinal's uncle, who seemed to be dying of scarlet fever. The doctors were helpless, but Cagliostro prescribed a 'yellow elixir' and told the prince that in two days he would be well enough to go for a walk, in a week to take a carriage ride and in three weeks to return to his normal routine at court – all of which duly came about.

Incidents like this did not endear Cagliostro to the medical profession and the

cardinal's friendship eventually led to the Grand Copht's downfall. He was wrongly implicated in the notorious Diamond Necklace affair in 1785, when a fabulous diamond-and-pearl necklace, intended as a bribe from the cardinal to queen Marie Antoinette to secure his political advancement, was appropriated by the slyly charming Comtesse Jeanne Valois de la Motte, who was supposed to deliver it secretly. She accused Cagliostro of stealing the necklace and denounced him as a quack and a false prophet. Although he was entirely innocent, he was arrested and imprisoned in the Bastille. He proved his innocence in time, but was ignominiously expelled from France.

Although he had been cleared of the Comtesse's accusations, the mud stuck and, when Cagliostro resumed his progress around Europe, he found himself markedly less welcome than before. He eventually made the fatal mistake of deciding to go to Rome. When the magician and his wife arrived in 1789, Pope Pius VI promptly alerted the Holy Office of the Inquisition. The Queen of Sheba, or Countess Serafina or Lorenza, now decided to be rid of her husband. She was persuaded to denounce him as a Freemason and heretic, and his fate was sealed. Kept in prison for months, he was finally tried by the Inquisition for heresy, sacrilege and fraud, while objects including 'instruments of lechery' and 'a doll in the shape of a flexible and yielding woman' were alleged to have been discovered among his belongings, with Masonic and magical equipment.

Found guilty after a long-drawn trial in April 1791, Cagliostro was sentenced to life imprisonment. He was immured at first in the castle of Sant' Angelo in Rome and was subsequently moved outside the city to the fortress of San Leo. There he died of a heart attack in August 1795 at the age of 52. The official report described him as 'a heretic, famous for his wicked ways', who had spread 'the impious doctrine of Egyptian Freemasonry' through the countries of Europe. He was denied burial in consecrated ground and the exact site of his grave is unknown.

FURTHER READING: R. Gervaso, *Cagliostro* (Gollancz, 1974); F. Ribadeau Dumas, *Cagliostro* (Allen & Unwin, 1967).



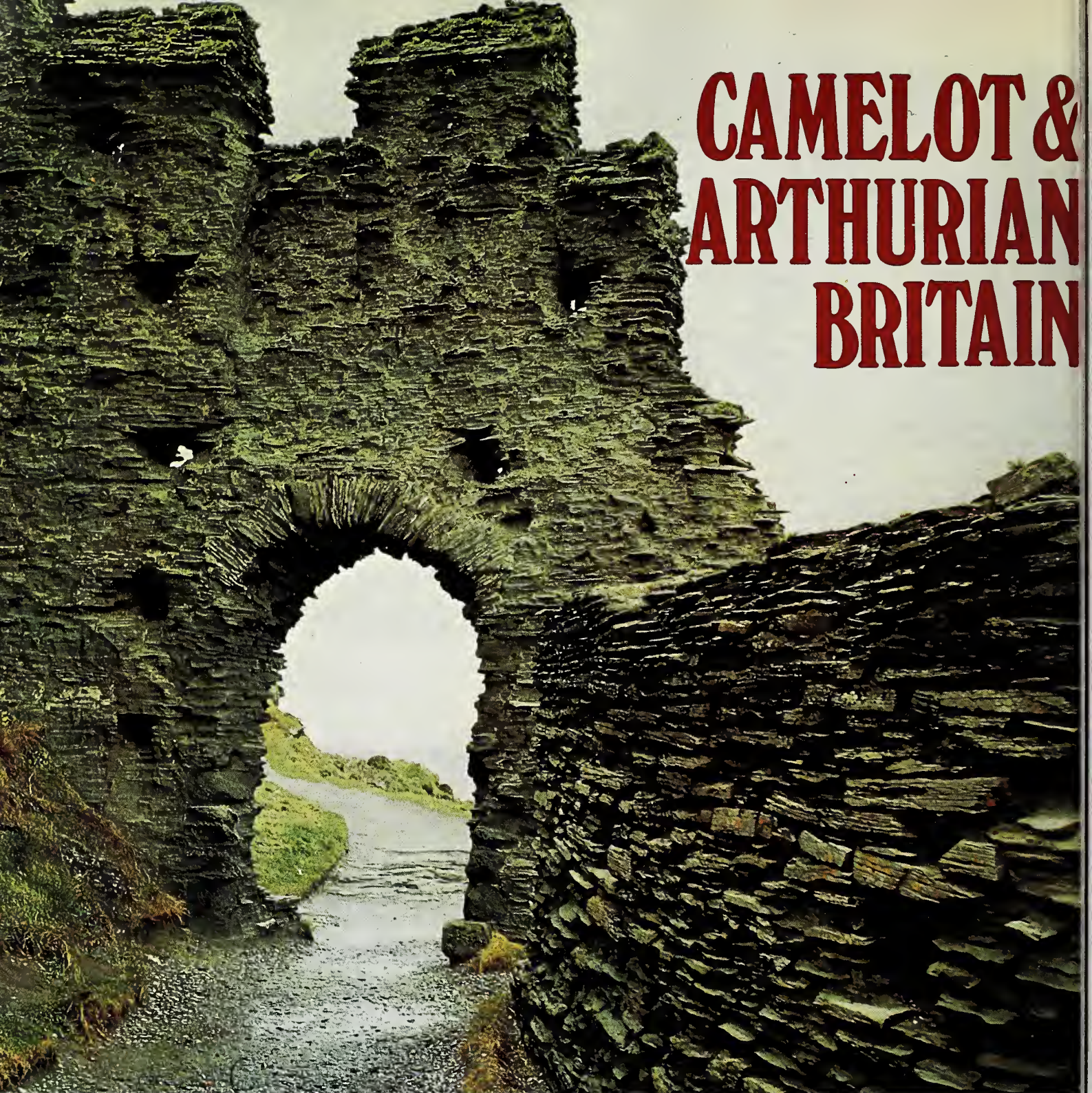
Portrait of Count Cagliostro, the famous 18th-century magician and wonder-worker: said to have succeeded in conjuring up angels, he was imprisoned by the Pope and died four years later in the dungeons of the Inquisition

Calumet

From the Latin for 'reed', the name given to the long-stemmed pipes of American Indians, and to the ceremonies themselves, in which the pipes passed among participants and onlookers, the smoke rising as an offering to the gods for peace and prosperity; Plains Indians used the ceremony to underline peace pacts, to celebrate victories and to welcome guests.

See TOBACCO.





CAMELOT & ARTHURIAN BRITAIN

Where was Camelot, the king's capital in the Arthurian legends? Archeological discoveries suggest that Cadbury Castle in Somerset has the strongest claim to be the 'real' Camelot

CAMELOT WAS THE CAPITAL of King Arthur where, according to legend, he reigned over the Britons before the Saxon conquest. It is not located on any authentic early map. However, *cam* and *camel* do occur as elements in British place-names of pre-Saxon origin. The oldest known stories of Arthur never refer to Camelot as such. The King first holds court there explicitly in the romance *Lancelot*, written by Chrétien de Troyes between 1160 and 1180. Three centuries later Malory makes it the chief city of the kingdom, where the Round Table is

housed. He usually identifies Camelot with Winchester, although it might be Carlisle in one passage. As for Tennyson, he never attempted to give Camelot a location. In the *Idylls of the King* it is symbolic, in the poet's words, 'of the gradual growth of human beliefs and institutions, and of the spiritual development of man.' The name has become evocative rather than geographical.

Local legends and antiquarian guesswork have proposed several sites for this elusive city. One theory places it near Tintagel, Arthur's reputed Cornish birthplace, in a district which contains the river Camel, and Camelford. However, the candidate with the strongest claim to a genuine underlying tradition is Cadbury Castle in Somerset. The 'Castle' is an earthwork fort

One theory places Camelot near Tintagel in Cornwall, where according to legend King Arthur was born. The medieval castle stands near the remains of a Celtic monastery dating from about the time of the real Arthur

of the pre-Roman Iron Age on an isolated hill 500 feet high, which looks over the Vale of Avalon to Glastonbury Tor in the distance. The ramparts surround an enclosure of 18 acres on top of the hill. The village of Queen Camel – once simply Camel – is fairly close, as is the River Cam. The antiquary John Leland, in the reign of Henry VIII, speaks of local people referring to the hill-fort as 'Camalat' and as the home of Arthur. Folklore of immemorial age has clustered round it. A well inside the ram-

Chéze Brown

From Land's End to the Grampians

The salient point about the mass of Arthurian oddments is the grandiose geography. Nobody else except the Devil is renowned through so much of Britain. From Land's End to the Grampian foothills, Arthur's name 'cleaves to cairn and cromlech.' We hear of the Cornish fortress at Kelliwic; of a Cornish hill called Bann Arthur and a stream called the River of Arthur's Kitchen; of Cadbury and its noble shades; of the lake Llyn Berfog in Merioneth, where Arthur slew a monster, and his horse left a hoof-print on the rock; of a cave by Marchlyn Mawr in Carnarvon, where his treasure lies hidden (woe

to any intruder who touches it); of a cave at Caerleon, and another near Snowdon, where his warriors lie asleep till he needs them; of still another cave in the Eildon hills, close to Melrose Abbey, where some say he is sleeping himself; of the mount outside Edinburgh called Arthur's Seat; of Arthur's Stone, and Arthur's Fold, as far north as Perth; and many more such places. Arthur seems to be everywhere.

The first natural deduction is that Arthur really was everywhere: that he flashed from end to end of his crumbling country on that terrible armoured charger, rallying the faint-hearts, rec-

onciling the factions, and pouncing on the bewildered heathen, with Kay and Bedivere riding beside him. And the second deduction...is that the man who bequeathed such a towering legend was no ordinary human being. Even if most of the Arthur stories were borrowed or fabricated, it is still necessary to explain why they should ever have been attached to Arthur. Even if the bards vested him with the attributes of a god, the question still remains: Why him in particular? To which there is no adequate answer but the readiest one - because he deserved it.

Geoffrey Ashe, *King Arthur's Avalon*.

parts is called King Arthur's Well, and the summit plateau King Arthur's Palace. The King is said to lie asleep in a cave and at midsummer the ghostly hoof-beats of his knights can be heard.

To say that this place or any other is Camelot raises the question, what meaning can be attached to such an identification? At Cadbury Castle there can never have been a medieval city of the kind imagined by Malory. Here, the issue was raised more insistently by the work of the Camelot Research Committee, who excavated the hill between 1966 and 1970, under the direction of Leslie Alcock. Traces have been found of several human occupations extending over a long time. Crucial to the Camelot problem are the proofs that about the first quarter of the 6th century AD, Arthur's presumed period, the hill was in fact the stronghold of a wealthy and powerful British ruler, who imported luxuries from the eastern Mediterranean, put up at least one substantial building on the piece of ground called King Arthur's Palace, and refurbished the defences by superimposing a huge drystone rampart of Celtic type, for which there are no known contemporary parallels anywhere else in Britain.

Interpreted in the light of other archaeological findings, these results suggest an acceptable meaning for the phrase 'Arthurian Britain', and for Camelot as a reality around which legends have grown, as they did around the smaller citadel of Troy.

The Real Camelot

Whatever the precise truth about the real Arthur, he symbolizes an historical fact which is no longer disputed. The British Celts, having lived under the rule of Rome and received a degree of civilization, rallied against the first Anglo-Saxon invaders and threw them back. During the first half of the 6th century, the Britons were generally in the ascendant throughout most of what is now England, and in the Scottish Lowlands. For a large part of this time they enjoyed relative peace and prosperity. Arthur appears to have been the British commander to whom the main credit was due. He may or may not have had some royal title, but his legendary reign is based far more on his exploits as a warrior leader and on the peace his victories secured.

Cadbury Castle, easily the largest and

most formidable of the known British strongholds of that period, fits logically into the picture as the headquarters of the great British leader. In that sense it could be the 'real Camelot' of the 'real Arthur'.

Furthermore, its archeological context includes other places that figure in the Arthurian legend. Thus at Tintagel on the north Cornwall coast, while there is no sign of the pre-Norman castle which was allegedly Arthur's birthplace, recent work suggests that the mighty headland was an important royal centre in Arthur's time,

Arthur feasting in Camelot, his capital city in the later legends and the place where the Round Table was housed: from a manuscript in the British Museum



and may even have been the crowning place of British high kings.

At a second Iron Age hill-fort, Castle Dore in Cornwall, traces have been found of 6th century resettlement by a west country chieftain. He built a timber hall, and may have been the original of King Mark in the Tristan romance. Further hill-top dwellings have been discovered in Wales, and also on Glastonbury Tor.

The suggestion that Cadbury Castle might have been the principal base of the real man behind the legends has stood up well. Some authors, however, have located Arthur's home ground elsewhere: Graham Phillips and Martin Keatman, for instance, place him in Gwynedd, the northwest part of Wales.

Knights of the Round Table

The historical questions most usually prompted by the romances may be summed up under two headings: the Round Table and the Holy Grail. In other words, can we make anything historically of Arthur's court on its secular side (meaning chiefly the order of knighthood) and on its religious side (meaning chiefly the motif of a Christian mystery which was peculiar to Britain)?

Under the first heading, one popular theory accounts for the armoured riders of Camelot by maintaining that the real Arthur turned the tide against the Saxons with a cavalry force, a personal corps of mounted men which was the basis of the legend. It is a fact that heavy mailed cavalry was developed by Rome in the last phases of the Western Empire, and may possibly have been seen in Britain early in the 5th century, a remembered model for imitation. It is also a fact that the Saxons were not horsemen, and might well have been routed by mounted Britons. For the cavalry theory there is still no direct evidence. But research has done much to trace the outline of an actual British nobility in the Dark Ages. From the results of excavation, coupled with clues in early Welsh poetry, it is possible to form a convincing picture of warriors fighting under Arthur's command and, perhaps, assembling in his Cadbury headquarters.

These 'knights', who undoubtedly did fight against the heathen, had little of the panoply of the Middle Ages. They went to



The place with the strongest claim to be the original Camelot is Cadbury Castle, a pre-Roman earthwork on an isolated hill in Somerset, not far from Glastonbury – which itself plays an important role in the legends of Arthur and the Grail. A case has also been made for the Roman town of Viroconium, close by Wroxeter on the northern border between England and Wales

Left The 'Old Work', part of the ruins of the Roman bath-house at Viroconium

Below Excavations at Cadbury Castle revealed that in the early 6th century, the period of the real Arthur, it was the stronghold of a powerful British chieftain: uncovering stone defences at Cadbury in 1966

Right Aerial view of Cadbury, perhaps the headquarters from which Arthur's cavalry rode out against the invading Saxons

Lesley & Roy Atkins Picture Library





N. Barrington

In this early society, a key place was occupied by bards. Poet-sages of legend like Merlin and Taliesin have real if shadowy originals

war in thick leather tunics and breeches with coats of mail, and carried long-bladed swords, spears and round whitewashed shields. They had horses and rode across country, whether or not they actually fought in the saddle. They were Christians, at least in name, and attended divine service before a battle. Their civilian garb was colourful if probably simple, and they wore gold ornaments and jewellery. In this early society, with its curious mingling of barbarism and sophistication, a key place was occupied by bards. A great chieftain's title depended partly on the appropriate bard's knowledge of his ancestry. Poet-sages of legend like Merlin and Taliesin have real if shadowy originals. It is because of these highly respected figures that the tradition

of Arthur himself, and of a British heroic age associated with him, was handed down to supply the material of medieval romance.

The Celts and the Grail

As to the religious question, little can be said with certainty about the beliefs underlying the Grail theme itself. But Arthurian Britain and the neighbouring Celtic lands were undoubtedly a scene of Christian activity. Some of it had the restless, journeying quality which the Grail stories reflect, and some was peculiar enough to accord with the strange atmosphere of these stories, if not with the imagery in detail.

The higher social classes in Britain were largely Christianized before the end of

Roman rule, and produced such eminent figures as St Patrick. The halting of the Saxon advance in Arthur's time enabled a series of apostles, chiefly Welsh, to preside over a much wider flowering of Christian culture both in Britain and in Ireland. Ireland in particular became the most cultured western land of the Dark Ages and owed a vast debt to the British saints after Patrick.

This Celtic Church of the British Isles was almost isolated from the Christianity of the Continent, and had a character of its own. It was based upon monasteries rather than upon dioceses; its ruling ecclesiastics were abbots rather than bishops; and the monks, not the secular clergy, set the tone. A Welsh tradition has suggested that the







His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Trustees of Lambeth Palace Library

Previous page Arthur's entry into Camelot, from a 14th century romance; British Museum
 Left The battle of Camlann in which Arthur was mortally wounded by the treacherous Mordred: from the 15th century St Alban's Chronicle. The real Arthur's warriors were not feudal knights but fought in leather tunics and breeches with coats of mail, and carried spears, swords and round whitewashed shields

Arthur and the Welsh

As an imaginative conception, Arthurian Britain has gone through two phases. The early Welsh tradition looked backward to a glorified 'Island of Britain' where Arthur and other heroes had flourished. Geographically, England was then 'Logria', and the 'Cymry' or Welsh had dominion over it. Then the Cymry lost Logria, and Wales alone preserved the remnants of Arthurian splendour. But some day, it was prophesied, Arthur would come back as a Celtic Messiah and subdue the English.

This view was more or less adopted by Geoffrey of Monmouth when, in the 1130s, he wrote his *History of the Kings of Britain* which did so much to plant an exaggerated and glamorized Arthurian realm in the minds of readers outside Wales. However, with the popularization of the theme by non-Celtic romancers, Arthur ceased to be a purely regional hero. England's Plantagenet sovereigns claimed to possess his birthplace, his chief cities and his grave, and to be his rightful successors in the lordship of all Britain. Edward I displayed Arthur's alleged remains at Glastonbury to prove that Arthur would never return to aid the Welsh.

Both aspects of Arthur were adroitly united by Henry Tudor. He stressed his own Welsh ancestry, and marched to overthrow Richard III under the standard of the Red Dragon. When he became king as Henry VII, he allowed his propagandists to construe the event as fulfilling the prophecy of Arthur's return — meaning, now, not that the Welsh had conquered the English, but that a true 'British' prince had saved the whole land from civil war and restored its ancient Arthurian glory.

The great poetic exponent of this Tudor myth is Edmund Spenser who, in *The Faerie Queene*, portrays the England of Elizabeth I as the magnificent kingdom of the Britons restored. The same motif recurs elsewhere in Elizabethan and Stuart literature, and as late as 1757 in Gray's poem *The Bard*. (See also ARTHUR; GRAIL.)

GEOFFREY ASHE

chief religious centres of Arthurian Britain were Amesbury, Glastonbury, and Llantwit Major in South Wales. All three had monasteries, none was the seat of a bishop.

The Celtic monks of Britain and Ireland were freer than their brethren abroad. They wandered widely and they were more democratic in outlook. Women were held in higher esteem than among Continental Christians, because the importance of the monks made nuns important as well. The ascetic contempt for worldly goods was adverse to some of the arts. Sculpture, for instance, was reduced to decoration, and there was no significant church architecture. However, in literature and scholarship the Irish at least excelled, and the one British monk of the 6th century whose writings survive, Gildas, was fairly well-read and wrote in Latin.

In the less Romanized western parts of Britain, and in Ireland, the Church did not have to contend — as formerly on the Continent — with a powerful and entrenched pagan priesthood. Even the Irish Druids were not very dangerous. Hence, the old religion was not viewed as Satanic in the same way, and the Celts preserved much mythology and speculation of a kind which went into eclipse elsewhere. The trend was encouraged by the fact that they could safely possess apocryphal Christian books which the Continental hierarchy forbade to the faithful.

The writings of Celtic monks include bizarre doctrines about angels and formulae for intercourse with the spirit world. St

Brigit is spoken of as a reincarnation of the Virgin Mary and, in some obscure sense, as a priestess. Pagan beings reappear in Christian contexts, not as devils but as heroes. Among them is the god Bran, a deity of the Celts both British and Irish (see BRAN). He occurs in some of the early legends of Arthur; as a ruler of Britain in the Welsh *Mabinogion*; as an Atlantic seafarer in an early Irish tale; and eventually in the Grail stories themselves, as Brons, a companion of Joseph of Arimathea. Pagan myth, Christian legend and classical scholarship combine in the saga of St Brendan's Voyage (see BRENDAN), which has links of its own with the Grail Quest.

Celtic Christianity was never heretical in any clearly defined way. But it communicated an odd flavour, a 'sense of something else'. The Celts were brought into conformity with Rome by the Synod of Whitby in 663, at a time when their missionaries, reversing the earlier movement westward, had deeply influenced the Anglo-Saxons.

The violence of the Whitby debate testifies to the feeling of the Roman clerics that they were confronting something baffling. There is no good reason to think that the Grail stories reflect anything specific that happened among Arthur's people, but the medieval authors who regarded that milieu as a proper setting for strange Christian mysteries were following a sound instinct. If Cadbury Castle was indeed Camelot, its closeness to Glastonbury, that Celtic sanctuary where the Grail legend has hovered for so long, may be more than coincidence.

FURTHER READING: Most aspects of this subject are surveyed in *The Quest for Arthur's Britain* (Granada Publishing Ltd., 1980), edited by Geoffrey Ashe, which includes chapters by the principal archeologists concerned, and a full bibliography.

CAMISARDS

THE NAME CAMISARDS was given to the Calvinist peasantry of the Cévennes and Bas-Languedoc regions of southern France, who at the beginning of the 18th century waged partisan warfare against the armies of Louis XIV. The word Camisard derives from *camisa*, meaning 'shirt' in the local dialect. It has been suggested that the Camisards may have changed their shirts frequently, to symbolize purity. According to another explanation, however, it was their custom of wearing white shirts over their ordinary clothing at night, as a distinguishing mark which could be thrown away during pursuit, which gained them their name.

The wars of religion which ravaged France during the 16th century had been terminated in 1598 by the Edict of Nantes, which gave the Calvinists, or Huguenots, freedom of conscience; the right to hold public worship in certain specified localities; and full civil rights, including the right to hold official positions. But these concessions were much resented by the Roman Catholic clergy, and were often called in question during the 17th century. In 1685 Louis XIV formally revoked the edict and thereby deprived his Protestant subjects of all religious and civil liberty.

The revocation came as a terrible shock to the Protestants, for the Edict of Nantes had been declared perpetual and irrevocable by three monarchs, including Louis XIV himself. Since it seemed impossible that they could be delivered from oppression by political means, Protestants turned for reassurance to the apocalyptic passages in the Bible. In this they were encouraged by Pierre Jurieu, a Protestant pastor who published a series of violently controversial tracts in which he interpreted the present situation in terms of prophecies taken from the Book of Revelation, and foretold the overthrow of Roman Catholicism in 1689. Circulating secretly in France, these works exerted a powerful fascination on Protestant minds. Their effect was intensified by the increasingly severe persecution to which the Protestants were now subjected. Driven from their churches and deprived of their pastors, they began to hold clandestine meetings in wild country places.

The Little Prophets

Excitement was particularly intense in the south of France, which already in the later Middle Ages had produced various religious movements of a markedly 'enthusiastic' nature (see ENTHUSIASM) and a more or less anti-Catholic tendency. Now a pupil of Jurieu, Du Serre, disseminated the apocalyptic message in the Dauphiné region, and trained young children as propagandists. These 'little prophets', headed by a girl known as 'the fair Isabel', went from village to village announcing that the reign of Antichrist had begun, and would shortly be terminated by the Second Coming of Christ. Adults listened and were soon gripped by an infectious enthusiasm. Those who had gone over to Roman Catholicism stopped attending Mass. In the presence of

the ecstatic children whole crowds would fall into convulsions, accompanied by uncontrollable sobbing.

It was in the mountains of the Cévennes, however, amongst the small farmers, cloth and silk weavers, and vine dressers, that the new faith flourished most vigorously and was most vigorously repressed. From 1686 onwards troops were quartered on these people for the winter, without compensation or any attempt at a fair distribution of the burden.

In reality these so-called *dragonnades* were imposed from Paris and were fully approved by the king; but the victims looked elsewhere for the cause of their woes. Profoundly royalist, they never blamed the king, but on the contrary prayed daily for his

well-being. Their hatred was reserved for the local authorities: the administrator of Languedoc, Nicolas Lamoignon de Basville; the local military commander, the Comte de Broglie; the priests and missionaries. And the local authorities, for their part, became ardent persecutors when, following the successful English revolution of 1688, the existence of a Protestant minority in France seemed to threaten the security of the realm.

'Fanaticism Reborn', an attack on the outrages perpetrated by the Camisards, French Protestant revolutionaries who believed that the Last Judgement was imminent, that bullets fired against them would turn to water, and that they were guided by mysterious lights in the sky



Bullets Turned to Water

The revolt of the Camisards broke out on the night of 24 July 1702. A band of some 40 Cévenols stormed the house of Abbé Du Chayla at Pont-de-Montvert and released seven Protestants who were held captive there. These men had been tortured. The abbé himself flogged them daily and he also forced them to sleep bolt upright, their feet squeezed in the middle of a great beam. The Cévenols killed the abbé, after which they went through the land killing many more priests and burning churches.

In the campaign that followed, the Camisards, as they were now called, operated in armed bands which took it in turn to fight. The men would take up arms to attack a Catholic village or castle; after which they would return to civilian life for a time. It is likely that the number involved never exceeded 4000, or the number under arms at any one time 1500. But these small, temporary units were supported by a population of some 200,000, and they operated in a wooded, mountainous, almost savage country, which they knew perfectly. In addition, they fought in the certainty of divine support. The ecstatic and visionary experiences which had marked the movement from the beginning continued in time of war. The Camisards were guided to places of safety by mysterious lights in the sky; supernatural voices consoled them; bullets fired at them turned to water. Children and women, shaking all over, encouraged them with prophecies of the Second Coming and the Last Judgement. All this enabled

them to carry on a campaign which immobilized a large number of regular troops, at one time as many as 60,000. The Camisards fought under a number of leaders. There was Esprit Séguier, who immediately after the killing of Abbé Du Chayla tried to organize a general massacre of the Catholic clergy; he was soon captured and burned alive. There was an old soldier named Laporte, who called himself 'Colonel of the Children of God' and named his camp 'the Camp of the Eternal'. There were other old soldiers, and some wool-carders, forest rangers, blacksmiths, bakers – all of them people of lowly origin, but inspired by fanatical faith and often by visionary experiences.

Fire and Sword

The most remarkable leader was undoubtedly Jean Cavalier (1681-1740). His father, an illiterate peasant, had been forced by persecution to become a Roman Catholic but the boy Jean was secretly brought up by his mother as a Protestant. He became a shepherd and then a baker's boy, until at the age of 20 he went to Calvinist Geneva for a year. Returning at the beginning of the revolt, he joined the Camisards and soon showed extraordinary military talents. He imposed rigorous discipline on his forces, but also inspired them with immense faith and courage; with the result that he was able to hold in check not only the Comte de Broglie but also three French marshals.

The struggle nevertheless ended in the defeat of the Camisards. Marshal

Montrevel adopted a harsh policy of extermination, burning hundreds of villages and putting most of the inhabitants to the sword. The chances of long-term resistance faded as the Governor, Basville, drove roads through the hitherto impassable country. Marshal Villars offered, instead, a chance of reconciliation; and in 1704 peace was negotiated between the Marshal, representing Louis XIV, and Jean Cavalier. During the negotiations Cavalier, who was still only 23 years old, conducted himself not as a defeated rebel but as an equal and honourable adversary.

The terms obtained by Cavalier for the Protestants included liberty of conscience and the right of assembly outside walled towns. But they were denied the right to have churches of their own, and for this reason the treaty was rejected by most of the Camisards, while Cavalier himself was repudiated as a traitor to the cause. The fortunes of the Camisards now rapidly deteriorated. By 1705 most military activity had ceased and the remaining leaders had either submitted or been killed. Thereafter the most vocal witnesses for the movement were a handful of refugees in London, who attracted lively curiosity by their ecstasies and prophecies, and also by an attempt to resurrect a dead body in St Paul's churchyard. The end of the war between France and England in 1711 deprived the Cévenols of the last hope of support from abroad. In 1715 Louis XIV announced, with medals and a proclamation, the extinction of the Camisard heresy.

NORMAN COHN

CANCER

DEPENDING UPON the precise time of the summer solstice, the Sun enters Cancer, the fourth sign of the zodiac, on 21 or 22 June, and leaves this sign on 22 or 23 July. Cancer is the crab, traditionally held to be ruled by the Moon, which also controls the tides, and these two watery influences are reflected in the Cancerian's emotional make-up.

On the other hand, the obstinate, thick-skinned characteristics of the crab have long been attributed to the Cancer native. The outcome of these two opposing tendencies is revealed in the Cancerian's love of theatricality; although it is not the stage itself that appeals, so much as the excitement of the spectacle, the ebb and flow of passion and action. For the Cancer native is a spectator rather than a protagonist; he or she may be deeply moved by the fortunes of the leading actor, but they are experiencing them vicariously.

When Cancerians do decide to participate – in politics, for example – they are still more likely to be the anonymous supporter than the party leader on the platform. Nevertheless, when the Moon is in Sagittarius or Virgo, they can show great ability as public speakers.

So, although those born with the Sun in this sign are fundamentally conservative and homeloving, they can frequently be carried away by the exciting prospect of



Mary Evans Picture Library

shaping their lives in imitation of some romantic example. Usually they are successful in this, for they are inventive, with an original streak, and good business organisers with an eye for a bargain. A result of this is that their homes, though comfortable, are likely to be dark and mysterious, filled with antiques and curios.

Good memory and a sharp ear characterise Cancer natives, and many journalists were born under this sign, as well as writers

such as George Bernard Shaw, Aldous Huxley, Marcel Proust and Ernest Hemingway. They are very good mimics, but the ease with which a Cancerian can identify with a situation, coupled with this inherent tendency to copy others, means that great care should be exercised in their choice of friends. Although affectionate and sociable by nature, they can be shy, and somewhat possessive, although showing great sensitivity to those they love.

Traditionally, Cancer as the ascendant sign determines stature that is often below average, with a rather fleshy body and legs that are short in proportion to the rest of the build, and sometimes a noticeably ungainly gait. The face may be rounded, with a prominent forehead, relatively light complexion and small eyes; the nose is likely to be shorter than average and may possibly even be upturned.

When the Moon is in this sign, its influence is deeply emotional, sometimes manifested in an over-dependence on the mother. Domestic security and happy marriage play a prominent part in the Cancer native's dreams, and in time this ideal may be transferred to the children, who can find themselves overwhelmed by parental love and interference.

Those with Moon in Cancer show an awareness of the feelings and motives of others that is almost telepathic. Among Cancerian mystics have been the philosopher Henri Bergson, Helena Blavatsky and Mary Baker Eddy (see BLAVATSKY; EDDY).

CANDLE

A CHILD'S birthday cake, with a candle on it for each year of his life, points straight to one facet of the symbolism of candles. A lighted candle, as a single source of light, a single fragment of the universe's store of light, stands for an individual person's life as a single fragment of life in the world.

Among Jewish communities in medieval Europe a way of seeing into the future was to put a lighted candle in a place shielded from draughts during the ten days before Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the period which was by tradition the time when each man's fate for the coming year was settled in heaven. If the candle went out, the person it represented would not see the year out. If it burned down to the end, he could expect one more year of life at least.

It was an old Jewish custom to light a candle for a dead man, a practice also adopted by Christians, and which may have its roots in the idea of giving the ghost the light of life in the darkness of the tomb. Jews lit candles by the bedside of a dying man to keep demons away, for demons are creatures of darkness and fear light, and a candle burned for a week in the room where someone had died.

At the Jewish Feast of Dedication or Feast of Lights (Hanukkah) one candle is lighted on the first evening, two on the second, and so on for the eight days of the festival. This feast, celebrated in late

December at the same time as the Christian Christmas festivities, may once have been a midwinter ritual at which fire and light were kindled to assist the reviving life of the sun. But it now commemorates the rededication of the Temple at Jerusalem to the worship of the Jewish God in 165 BC, after it had been profaned by the Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (see ANTICHRIST).

The Eyes of the Lord

On the last day of Hanukkah a passage from the Bible is read (Numbers, chapter 8) which refers to one of the great symbols of Judaism, the Menorah, the seven-branched golden candlestick or lampstand said to stand six feet high, which Antiochus removed from the Temple and destroyed. A new one was made to replace it. The Menorah is first mentioned in the book of Exodus (chapters 25 and 37) where God instructs Moses to have it made. It appears again in the vision of the prophet Zechariah (chapter 4) who saw 'a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on top of it, and seven lamps on it'. An angel told him that 'these seven are the eyes of the Lord, which range through the whole earth.'

The 'eyes' have been interpreted as the seven planets, watching the earth from the sky, with the implication that the Jewish God claimed the powers of the planetary gods of Mesopotamia. Alternatively, or additionally, the seven lamps may have symbolized the creation of the world in seven days. The last Menorah, which stood in the Temple at the time of Christ, was

carried off to Rome by the Emperor Titus, who destroyed the Temple in 70 AD. It is shown on his triumphal arch at Rome.

The 4th century African Christian writer Lactantius commented sardonically that the heathen kindled lights to God as if he was in darkness, and suggested that if they contemplated the sun in the heaven they would see that God had no need of their candles. But in fact Christians themselves used candles, not only to give light at their services, but to carry in funeral processions, to burn at the tombs of the dead and to kindle before the relics of the saints.

The tendency to connect candles with the dead, and with their ghosts, also occurs in the West. A guttering candle warns that the life of someone in the house is flickering to its close, and if a candle burns blue, a ghost is near. American belief says that a candle left to burn in an empty room will cause a relative's death. Another omen of death is a corpse candle or fetch candle, the mysterious light which hovers in the air and moves away from you if you follow it (see WILL-O'-THE-WISP). The magical burglar's implement called the Hand of Glory is the hand of a dead man and it holds a candle made of his fat. The light of this candle carries so strong an aura of the petrifying stillness

Though some early Christian writers scorned the pagan use of candles in ritual, Christians themselves quickly began to carry candles in funeral processions and light them for saints: interior of a Roman Catholic church at Chichicastenango in Guatemala



Picturepoint London

of death that it prevents anyone who sees it from moving (see HAND).

Candles for Lucifer

Candles have a role in the superstitions of love as well as of death. In rural America, a girl may test her boyfriend's fidelity by lighting a candle outdoors near his house. If the flame bends towards her, or towards her lover's house, all is well. If not, the young man is faithless. But in American belief a candle can help to reclaim his affections. The girl needs merely to thrust two pins through the wick of a burning candle. This simple ritual may symbolize a 'pinning down' of his love.

Witches presented candles to the Devil at their meetings, suitably enough, since one of

his names is Lucifer, 'lightbearer'. In some cases they lit them from a candle which he bore in his hand or on his head. In 1594 in Puy-de-Dôme, in the hill country of southern France, Jane Bosdeau's lover took her to a witch meeting where 'there appeared a great black goat with a candle between his horns.' All the witches lighted candles from it and then danced around him in a circle. In 1590 the North Berwick witches met in a church and he who took the part of the Devil, in a black gown and a black hat, preached to them from the pulpit, round which were lights 'like great black candles'.

In 1679, when the Police Commissioner of Paris investigated the activities of a widow known as La Voisin, fortune teller, abortionist and supplier of poisons and

black magical ceremonies, a chapel was discovered in her house. Its walls were draped in black and on the altar stood black candles. There were also candles made of human fat provided by one of La Voisin's lovers, a public executioner. It was La Voisin who arranged the Masses said for Madame de Montespan (see BLACK MASS), in which a woman lay naked on the altar, her arms stretched out in the form of a cross and with black candles in her hands.

A Light in Darkness

For modern witches the eve of 2 February is one of their four main festivals, harking back to old pagan ceremonies in Europe at this time of year, involving the kindling of fires and torches, apparently to drive away the winter darkness and prepare the way for the coming of spring. The Christian festival of Candlemas on 2 February commemorates the Purification of the Virgin Mary, when she took the baby Jesus to the Temple and was told that he would grow up to be 'a light to lighten the gentiles'. Candles were associated with it by the 5th century in Jerusalem and a procession with lighted candles became and remains part of the Roman Catholic ritual.

In the Highlands of Scotland on the eve of 1 February, the day of St Bride or St Bridget, who was originally a pagan goddess (see BRIGIT), a bed was placed near the door and one of the household went out, came back in again and said, 'Bridget, Bridget, come in, thy bed is ready.' One or more candles were lit to burn by the bed all night. The purpose was apparently to welcome the goddess who would soon bring the spring, with the candles standing for the light which would dispel the winter dark. Similarly, the candles on a Christmas tree suggest the birth of the 'Light of the World' in the middle of winter.

The symbolism of creating light in darkness also lies behind the use of candles in magical rituals. In a recent book, *Magical Ritual Methods*, W. G. Gray says that most formal rituals begin with the kindling of a fire or light and that 'lighting candles should never be done indifferently or with lack of attention.' At first the room should be in total darkness.

The darkness is banished by lighting the candle which is a sign of the power entrusted to man, the power with which 'we can make Suns on earth, and it endows us with minor Godship . . . so we light the taper, which becomes a Rod, and slowly stand upright . . . When we were entirely in the dark, we were afraid to move from the safety of our stone shelter, but now as Light-Bearers we can move anywhere we will, bearing the precious gift wheresoever it may be needed.'

In which connection it may be worth recalling that the sin for which the original Light-Bearer was hurled from heaven, we are told, was pride.

(See also FIRE; LIGHT.)



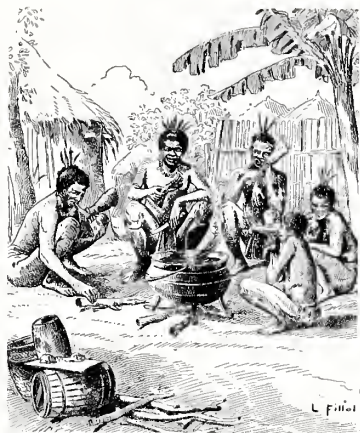
Axel Pognant

Candles are often connected with the dead, and the candle flame with the ghosts of the dead, shimmering in darkness. Sicilian fishermen burn ornate candles to their patron saint to obtain his blessing and protection

Cannibalism

The eating of human flesh by others: frequently a way of acquiring the strength, skill or other qualities of the victim; sometimes a form of burial, sometimes a way of protecting yourself against the ghost of a man you have killed, sometimes part of the initiation of a shaman or medicine-man; a human victim might be identified with a god and eaten to bring the god into the bodies of his worshippers.

See FOOD; SABBATH; SACRIFICE; VAMPIRES; WEREWOLVES.



Canonization

Formal recognition that a man or woman is a saint; in the Roman Catholic church the process, in which the pope is the final judge, may take many years; if the candidate's reputation survives the first steps in the procedure he is known as 'the Venerable'; at a later stage he is beatified and called 'the Blessed'; recognition of sainthood then depends on establishing that miracles have been obtained through appeals to the Blessed since beatification.

See SAINTS.



CAPRICORN

THE SUN IS IN CAPRICORN, the tenth sign of the zodiac, between either 21 or 22 December, and 20 or 21 January, depending upon the precise time of the winter solstice. Capricorn is *kusarikku*, the fish-ram, or *suhurmashu*, the skate goat: two of the names given to the great Babylonian god Ea, ruler of the region described in the Bible as 'the waters under the earth'. But Ea – the friend of mankind, and the personification of knowledge and intelligence – was a very different character from Saturn, who has been regarded as the astrological ruler of Capricorn for the past 2000 years.

The dual nature of this relationship is reflected in the astrological attributes of those born with the Sun in Capricorn, for the word 'capricious' may well describe them. Saturn traditionally represents restriction, limitation and control, and the Capricornian is often represented as a hard-working, humble, rather dreary person who never ventures to take a risk and constantly expects things to go wrong. It is true that Capricorn natives show a tendency to be over-serious, pessimistic and emotionally inhibited; but, just at the moment when they need to be shrewd and cautious, they may be seized by the urge to ruin everything by an outburst of irresponsible flippancy, and only the strongest self-control will prevent them from giving way to temptation.

Economy and Precision

Chief among the qualities derived from Saturn that the Capricornian often turns to good account is economy. This does not necessarily reveal itself in the form of meanness, although Capricornians often feel that the gods keep them a little short, so that there is not much that they can willingly afford to give away. Among artists, typical Capricornian musicians include Mozart and Schubert. When Mozart showed one of his orchestral scores to the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor remarked: 'What a terrible lot of notes, Mr Mozart'; to which the composer replied, 'No more than is necessary, your Majesty'. To this day we admire the clean, economical style of Mozart, who never wrote a superfluous note of music.

As writers, Capricorn natives display the same economy, and their brevity often results in wit. They say what they have to say in the fewest possible words, and are far more likely to provide too little explanation of their meaning than too much. Some may say that it is from laziness that they write so concisely, but the elegant precision of Francis Bacon's *Essays* was not due to laziness. Nor was the work of two of the most condensed and (to some) difficult modern writers – Gertrude Stein and James Joyce, both of whom were born 'under Capricorn'.

The same qualities, of maximum effect with minimum effort, make Capricornians notable public speakers, shrewd and to the point – as were the speeches of Alexander

authority; but they expect their subordinates to perform exactly what they have undertaken, no more and no less, and they are fair but strict judges. They reveal a clever and subtle intellect, and delight in winning arguments; they make good friends within a relatively small circle, but bitter, revengeful enemies.

Not a Creator

Herbert T. Waite, the English occultist who first formulated much of modern astrology, made a very perceptive comment: 'If all the world consisted of Capricornians it would be a hive of industry and order; but we should be offering up human sacrifices to wooden gods as of old and doing much as we did thousands of years ago; for



Hamilton and Adlai Stevenson. The concern with economy and precision would also be vital in a good general: Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson and Douglas MacArthur were all Capricornians.

The average Capricorn native is confident and rather self-centred, suspicious, and capable of waiting a long time to reach a goal. They tend to be ambitious, and frequently succeed in becoming wealthy; but their lives are not always altogether happy, and they may attract considerable enmity from people who do not understand or trust them. When their ambitions remain unfulfilled they tend to become surly and melancholy, avaricious and given to complaining. Capricornians are good managers, and are never happy until they can exercise

Capricorn does not create, at most it improves, organises and sacrifices.'

Traditionally, Capricorn as the ascendant sign determines a stature slightly below average, with a dry and rather bony body; a long and angular face, with thin neck, and sparse hair; narrow chest and possibly weak knees, resulting in a slightly odd carriage. Although the constitution is quite strong, those with Capricorn as the ascendant sign frequently complain of ill-health, and are subject to melancholia and depression. The Moon in this sign is said to be 'in detriment', signifying a cold and cautious disposition. There is ambition still, but it is directed solely to material self-interest and the pursuit of status, without any consideration of spiritual matters.



Camera Press London

Does the history of our past and future lives lie ready and waiting in a pack of cards? Card readers believe that cards contain a wealth of occult meaning, which enables them to tell us our fortunes

READING THE PAST, the present and the future by means of a pack of ordinary playing cards or by the more elaborate and larger pack known as the Tarot, is one of the most popular methods of divination. The use of symbolically decorated cards for fortune telling probably preceded their use in games of chance, and later replaced the more primitive forms of divination, such as the throwing down of a bundle of arrows or sticks, or the inspection of entrails. Often the clairvoyant or the gypsy resorts to additional methods, gazing into a crystal ball or into a bowl of water, to confirm the reading already taken from the cards.

Cards have been made of bark, bamboo, ivory, skin or linen as well as of pasteboard and nowadays of plastic. The designs have been variously painted by hand, hand-printed from blocks, engraved or lithographed. Among the fine examples of cards to be seen in the national museums and private collections there are many variations in design. German packs, for instance, use different emblems for the 'pips' from those common in France and England.

The origin of our modern packs is still a matter of dispute and there are almost as many theories propounded by occultists and historians to choose from as there are addicts

of the cards. Cards were known as early as 969 AD in China and according to a Hindu legend they were invented in India by a Maharajah's wife to cure her husband of the nervous habit of pulling his beard, by keeping his hands occupied. Others claim that the ancestors of our modern cards were imported into Europe by the gypsies, who had originally brought them from Egypt. References to the Tarot cards are found as early as 1299 in Italy. A 14th century manuscript shows a king and two courtiers playing cards, and the pips are arranged in the same way as they are today.

The Devil's Pack Book

The decorative and colourful Tarot cards, from which our more simplified standard packs are thought to be descended, are still used in Mediterranean countries in a game called *tarocchi*. A complete Tarot pack consists of 78 cards, divided into four suits: Cups, Wands, Coins and Swords. Each suit has 14 cards, comprising the numerals one to ten, and four trumps or court cards — King, Queen, Knight or Chevalier, and Valet or Jack, named after the picture of a blazoned or coated figure of a court personage. Sometimes the court cards represent ancient and contemporary heroes, and they have even been known to commemorate political events.

In addition to the four suits of the Tarot there are 22 major trumps, which are called the Major Arcana, because they are believed to contain hidden occult mysteries. These picture cards with their unusual design and

such bizarre titles as the 'Hanged Man' and 'Death', are of great significance when used for fortune telling.

The standard pack of today, though bearing some resemblance to the ancient Tarot, consists of only 52 cards, divided into four suits, two red and two black: Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds and Spades. The Knight of the Tarot is omitted from the standard pack, leaving only three court cards in each suit. Some packs, those of Spain for example, did not include the Queen as it was thought unseemly to represent a woman in the Devil's Pack Book, as cards were often called. In France, on the other hand, the Queens sometimes exposed their voluptuous breasts, and there were sets of naked ladies to satisfy the tastes of licentious gamblers.

How to Tell Your Fortune

Every card reader has his or her favourite method for laying out the cards. Often two methods are used one after another, if greater clarification is needed or if there are additional questions which require more precise answers. When using the standard pack, it is necessary to start with a simple interpretation of each of the 52 cards and later to gain an understanding of all they mean, by themselves and in different combinations with other cards.

Of course, there are variations in the interpretation of each card but a general consistency is apparent if different authorities are consulted. In addition, every card is given a qualified or extended meaning and a 'dark' or 'light' significance when modified



People of fair complexion and stainless character; a symbol of love from the erotic to the spiritual; aristocrats and clergymen



Dark complexioned and of a frank and open disposition; hard workers and astute businessmen



Medium colouring and of equable temperament: thrifty and dependable, they often succeed as farmers or craftsmen



People of sombre appearance who are born leaders; often soldiers and politicians

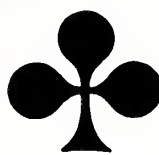
by other cards in close proximity. The following, an easy method for beginners to practise, is known as the Wheel of Fortune.

The fortune teller chooses from the standard pack the court card that most resembles the client. In the case of a married woman of fair complexion, the Queen of Hearts would be taken and placed face upwards in the centre of the table, between the reader and the client. Having shuffled the rest of the pack thoroughly so that no 'influences' remain attached to the cards from any previous contact, the fortune teller hands them to the client, instructing her to shuffle them herself and to put her thoughts concerning her hopes and fears, her wishes and questions, into them. She is then asked to cut the cards into three random packs with her left hand – said to be that of the Devil – and to place these face downwards on the table. A good reader may say, 'this is a naughty superstition and you must not believe a word of it', a phrase which in no way deters the client from drinking in every word, but it is to be hoped that it salves the reader's conscience.

The fortune teller then turns each pack face upwards and gains a general indication from the three top cards that are now exposed. Suppose the cards revealed are the King of Clubs, the Seven of Hearts and the Ten of Spades. A brief interpretation might read thus: 'A man, well-placed, powerful and possibly in the Consular Service, is bringing you good luck; I think he has a gift for you. He tells you that you must make your home anew in some far-away place. I think it must be your husband, Madame.' If the fortune teller receives a positive response from the client, she gathers the three packs together again, reshuffles them and deals 9 packs of 3 cards each, face downwards (see diagram on following page), while saying: 'three above you (1), three below you (2), three behind you (3), three before you (4) three for your house and home (5), three for your hopes and fears (6), three for what you don't expect (7), three for what you do expect (8), and three for what is sure to come to pass (9).' Under each heading the following indications might be expected as pack by pack is turned face upwards by the reader and each card has its significance revealed:

1 Above you This pack represents both the blessings and the evils that are being

Standard



Germanic



Tarot



Other names or possible origins

Grails,
chalices,
crystals or
mirrors

Batons,
sticks or
rods of
power

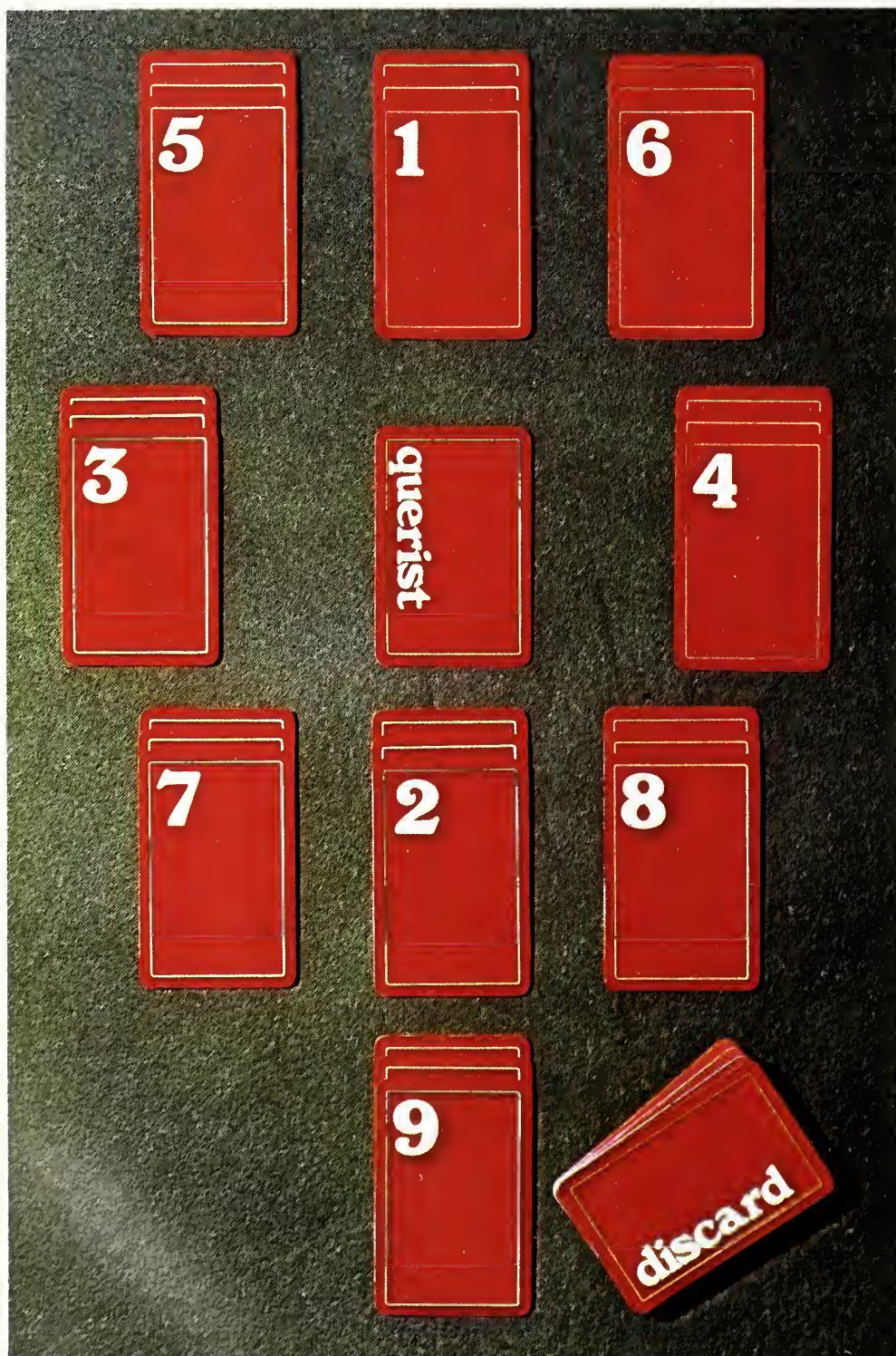
Patons,
seals,
pentacles,
'lots' or
precious
stones

Arrows,
daggers or
magical
weapons

THE NUMERALS

	Hearts	Diamonds	Clubs	Spades
1	Love; marriage	An engagement	Conquest	A death
2	Friendship	Trouble	Enterprise	Treachery
3	Pleasure	Social activities	A kind gesture	Separation
4	Change	A legacy	Gaiety	Peace
5	An inheritance	A rendezvous	A lawsuit	A funeral
6	Originality	Forgiveness	Good news	A stroke of luck
7	Good fortune	Money	Success	Prudence
8	Company	Prosperity	Deception	Quarrels
9	A wish	A loss	Anticipation	Suffering
10	Home	Financial gain	Travel	Deprivation

Many people are alarmed when the Ace of Spades, known popularly as the Death Card, appears ...



experienced at the present time, 'hanging over one's head'. They will be material, psychological and spiritual.

2 *Below you* Both the good and the bad things that one is responsible for oneself. All that is under control.

3 *Behind you* Joyful and sad times in the past.

4 *Before you* A description of coming events in the near future.

5 *Your house and home* A description of how these are now and how they will be in the future.

6 *Your hopes and fears* These will be described, confirmed or refuted.

7 *What you don't expect* Good or bad news and the turn of events to come.

8 *What you do expect* A clarification of the client's own often vague thoughts and wishes or fears about the future.

9 *What is sure to come to pass* A final and, it is to be hoped, rousing prediction for both the near and the distant future of the client.

To conclude, the fortune teller makes a summary of the whole Wheel of Fortune so that events and the people appearing as these come about are clearly impressed on the client's mind. To clarify further if necessary, or to answer any special questions arising out of the reading, the client may draw three cards at random out of the discard pack which, when placed face upwards, will give the divinatory answer.

Many people are alarmed when the Ace of Spades, known popularly as the Death Card, appears and the fortune teller should take great care to interpret this in a way that will dispel the fears of the client and bring reassurance and hope.

The Greater Trumps

The curiously decorated collection of 78 cards which form the Tarot pack are the cards for fortune telling and are said to reveal the hidden mysteries of the universe. Every true adept of the cards should acquire a pack of Tarots, of which there are many different versions, although basically their symbolism is the same. There are several variations in establishing the sequence of the 22 major trumps or Major Arcana and many different symbols have been used. The French Tarot of Marseilles is perhaps the most faithful to the originals, while those depicted by the occultists Oswald Wirth and



QUEEN A fine woman of noble lineage

QUEEN A fine woman of noble lineage

KNAVE A charming but unfaithful young man who brings news



KING A distinguished and powerful man; possibly a diplomat

QUEEN A woman of gentle birth and strong character

KNAVE A dashing young man who is given to extravagance



KING A man of forceful character; possibly a soldier

QUEEN A seductive and treacherous woman; a temptress

KNAVE A serious-minded youth who may prove a formidable opponent



KING A man of affairs, rich and worldly; often a business tycoon

QUEEN A rich and beautiful woman, elegant and sophisticated

KNAVE A gifted young man who will succeed in life

Left Some of the interpretations to be given to the 'court' cards of the contemporary pack
Facing page A typical layout for fortune-telling (see text)

A. E. Waite stress the Rosicrucian, cabalistic, Grail and Cathar aspects.

Adaptations of the Tarot in the last century presented the symbolism in naturalistically engraved pictures, often with a text added to facilitate their reading by the uninitiated fortune teller. Eliphas Levi and other occultists link the Major Arcana with the Hebrew alphabet and Arnold Uschar links them with runic letters.

For the collector, nothing can be more fascinating than to go in search of ancient and modern packs with local variations in shape and design. Those of Naples, Trieste and from as far away as Russia and Mexico are enchanting, while those from Germany and neighbouring countries are hard in design and mechanically crude in printing.

The Tree of Cards

A simple reading, using the Tarot cards, can be made by applying the same interpretation of the numerals and court cards as outlined for the standard pack. The addition of the Chevalier or Knight gives an extra court card for clarifying a prediction.

For a more detailed analysis the fortune teller lays out the cards according to a pattern based on the Tree of Life of the Cabala (see diagram on following page). This reading is performed only once for a general indication, but more comprehensive results are obtained if the process is repeated three times, first for the past, second for the present, and third for the future.

The fortune teller shuffles the full pack well, and after the client has also shuffled, the reader makes ten packs of seven cards each and lays them face downwards in the order shown in the diagram. Proceeding from pack to pack, the cards are turned face upwards and each card read separately, then in conjunction with the other packs, and finally the whole revealed Tree of cards is read as an unfolding 'story' woven into an integrated whole. Each individual pack can be interpreted in the following way: pack 1 relates to that which is divine; pack 2 to fatherhood; pack 3 to motherhood; pack 4 to compassion; pack 5 to strength or conquest; pack 6 to sacrifice; pack 7 to love; pack 8 to the arts and crafts; pack 9 to health; pack 10 to worldly matters.

It will be seen that the packs have the pattern of a tree with a central trunk and two supporting branches. Seen from the reader's



The Fool
Folly
Everyman
on the
Life-Path



The Juggler
or the Magus
A gamble
Choice on the
Life-Path



Pope Joan or
Juno
Wisdom
Woman, the
mysterious



The Empress
Action
Woman, the
intuitive



The Emperor
Will
Man, the
intelligent



The Pope or
Jupiter
Inspiration
Man, the
creative



The Lovers
Love
The Great
Choice



The Chariot
Travel
Providence
guides



Justice
A decision
'As a man
sows ...'



The Hermit
Sagacity
Hidden
knowledge



Wheel of
Fortune
Destiny
The Wheel
of the Law



Strength
Courage
'Know
thyself'



The Hanged
Man
Catastrophe
Saint or
sinner?



Death
Inevitability
The Great
Initiation



Temperance
Moderation
The Middle
Path



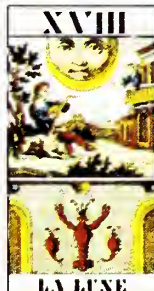
The Devil
Temptation
The Great
Secret



Tower struck
by lightning
Change
Renunciation



The Star
Hope
Glory of the
Adept



The Moon
Danger
The Great
Portal



The Sun
Happiness
Transcendent
Glory



The Day of
Judgement
Progress
The final
assessment



The World
Gain
Spiritual
attainment

THE TAROT THE 22 CARDS OF THE MAJOR ARCANA

viewpoint, the central pillar represents Harmony, the left hand branch Discipline and the right hand Love. Furthermore, the packs form three triangles on the Tree: at the top, an upright one, below this two downward pointing ones. The first triangle is that of the Spirit, the second that of Reason and the third that of Intuition. The lowest pack (10) at the foot of the Tree symbolizes the Earth. The discard pack may be used for clarification or for qualifying if necessary. Some study of the Cabala is essential for this method of divination (see CABALA).

Besides the indication obtained from the numerals and court cards of the Minor Arcana, the 22 trumps of the Major Arcana enable the fortune teller to elaborate on the reading. With the Hanged Man, for example,

number 12 of the major trumps, the image is of a youth hanging upside down by one leg from a gibbet. The positive prediction is of self-sacrifice; the negative of treachery.

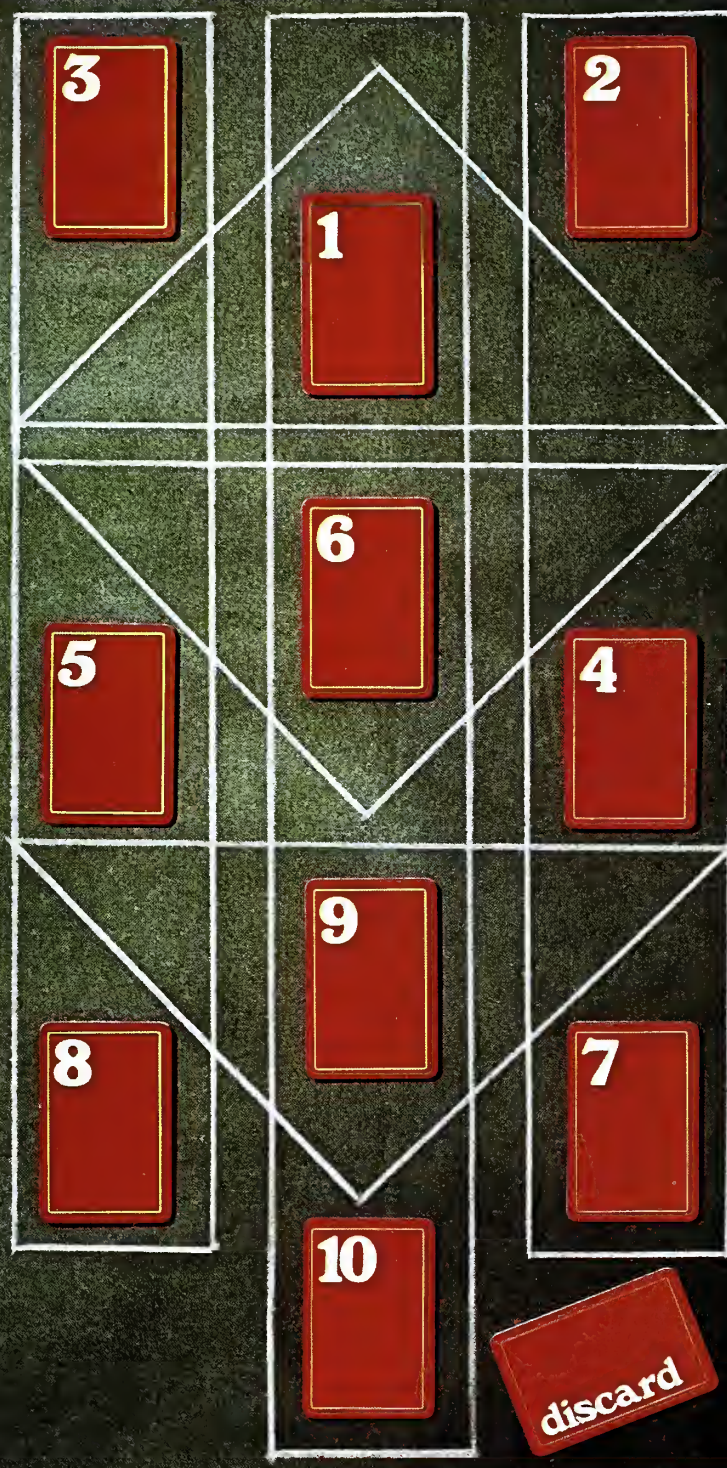
Among the gypsies, the Master subjects his disciple to a trance-initiation in which the disciple experiences for himself the symbolism of each trump card. In the case of the Hanged Man the experience is of being offered as a human sacrifice, of being tortured and dismembered, of a separation between the astral and the physical body. The 'shade' of the disciple seems to wander, hopelessly lost, in the underworld where he faces the negation 'God is not'. Only if his love for, and faith in, the Master is so strong that he can still, in the darkness, feel identity with him, will he be reborn to live more fully

on the earth above him. In identifying himself with the Master he comes to understand and experience the yearly and continuous death and rebirth of the sacrificed God. In this resurrection, 'God is'.

A Tale of the Tarot

A delightful though improbable story is told about the origin of the Tarot cards. When the civilization of Egypt with its temple libraries of occult lore was about to be destroyed by invading barbarians, the priest-initiates gathered together to discuss how best to preserve their ancient wisdom for posterity. In spite of much head-scratching, no bright idea was forthcoming until one initiate proposed that it should be memorized by the most virtuous and most

How to lay out the Tarot cards in the pattern based on the Tree of Life of the Cabala (see text page 345)



The Seed of the Future

Telling fortunes with the cards can be an amusing pastime. It can also be a deeply serious method of divination and spiritual awakening when practised by one with the gift of far-seeing as well as a profound knowledge of occult symbolism. The daily practice of taking a single card and meditating on it, thus bringing its meaning to life, is one which is highly recommended.

All this inevitably leads us to question the validity of card-reading, to wonder whether there is really 'anything in' the cards, whether messages conveyed by the random fall of shuffled cards can be rationally explained. The devotee of the art naturally has no doubts about this. But it necessitates a belief that there is no random element in anything we do; that the seemingly chance arrangement of cards is, in reality, 'designed' by the unconscious mind of the subject (see FATE).

Belief in clairvoyant powers is also a requirement. Some would attempt to explain these powers as a form of telepathic communication that spans or is outside time and space. The subject's mental processes are transferred to the symbols on the cards, which the reader is able to re-translate or interpret. The stored memories in the subject's unconscious uncover the past, immediate preoccupations give the present. If both the past and the present are made known to the conscious or waking mind, the future will almost inevitably unfold itself.

In other words, the future lies hidden like a seed in the earth, ready to sprout, grow and flower. To the seer, the flower may be known from its seed, the future is the child of the past. The symbols on the cards correspond to the archetypal images, the basic factors which lie deep in the collective unconscious of every man. When these living archetypes 'click' with their counterparts on the cards, they make themselves known by means of the intuition and speak through the lips of the seer. Destiny is in the hands of the archetypes.

(See also DIVINATION; TAROT.)

BASIL IVAN RAKOCZI

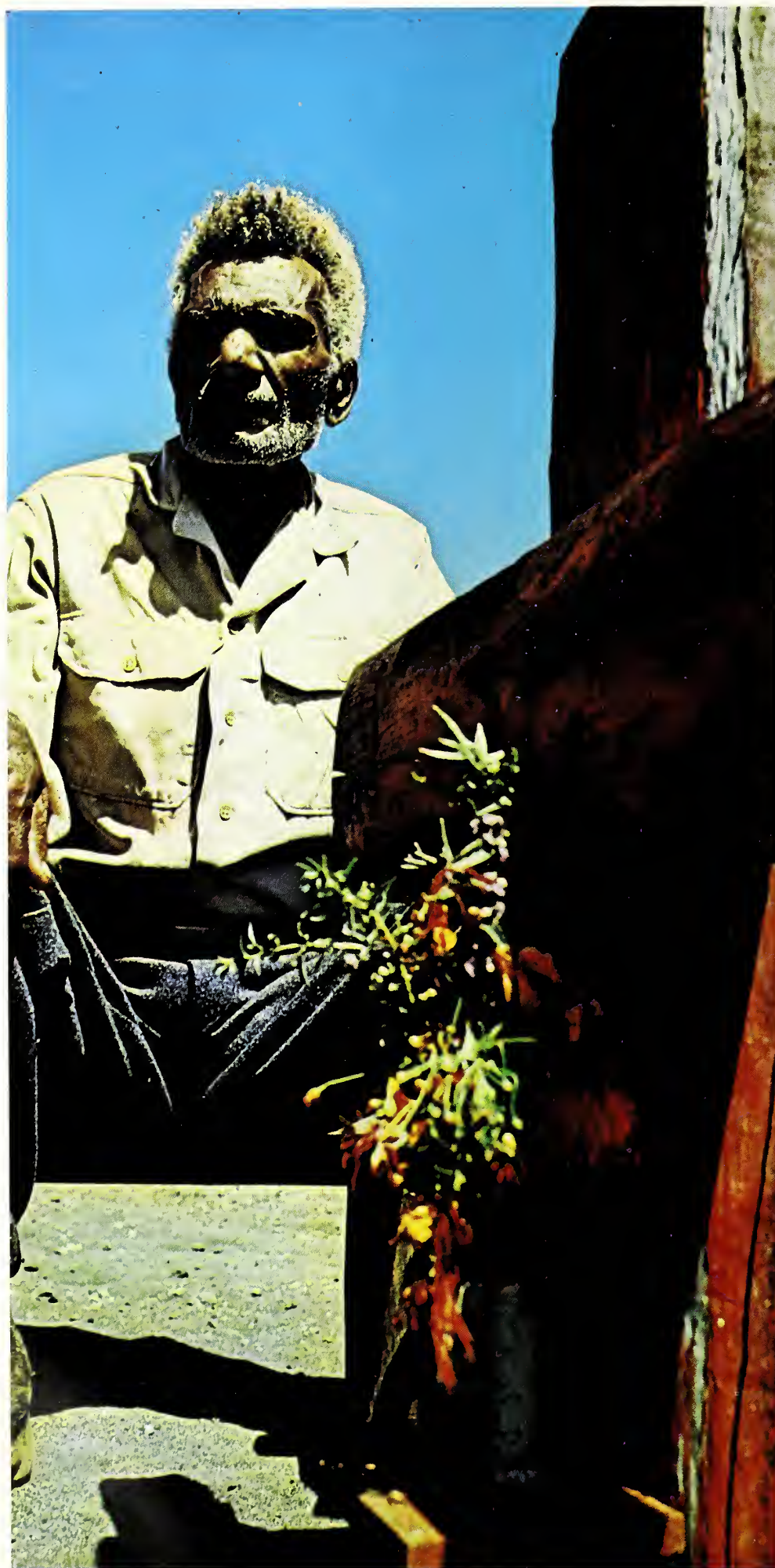
learned among them, and that he should be smuggled out of the land in the hope that he could found a new College of the Mysteries in some more propitious place.

An excellent suggestion, no doubt, but not one initiate present was found worthy of the task. Not one possessed the required memory capacity, nor dared to submit himself to the test of utter virtue. All had been contaminated by the flesh one way or another. The conference was at a standstill, the enemy all but thundering at the gates. 'I have it', an aged priest cried out at last. 'Virtue is all but non-existent in this evil world of ours and certainly is not appreciated by barbarian hordes. Let us appeal to vice, which is forever triumphant among mortal men. Let us hastily inscribe under glyph and

symbol upon a pack of easily concealed papyrus cards, our stored wisdom of the ages. We will then confide these cards to any passing rogue or vagabond, explaining that they are to be used for games of chance or hazard, in fact for gambling. Then we will speed him on his way, knowing that he will cheat all he meets by this cunning method and thus, unknowingly, save the wisdom for a more enlightened day.'

A passing gypsy, hoping for a little loot, gleefully pocketed the cards. Down the ages the wisdom travelled, passed from hand to hand, copied from one pack to another, an instrument for gain or loss, to be seen in every tavern of the world to this day. So the wisdom has remained for us to unveil, sheltered by the chicanery of tricksters.

FURTHER READING: N. Dee, *Fortune-telling by Playing Cards* (Sterling, 1982); Papus, *The Tarot of the Bohemians* (Wilshire Book Co.); Brian Innes, *Tarot* (Arco, 1978); M. Jones, *It's in the Cards* (Weiser, 1984).



These cults of the Pacific, which attempt to bring ships or aeroplanes loaded with cargo to the natives by magical means, are a reaction to white domination and an attempt to escape it. They are also an attempt to realize a dream

CARGO CULTS

AT FIRST GLANCE the so-called cargo cults that have arisen repeatedly in the last century throughout Melanesia in the southern Pacific appear to be among the strangest of religious manifestations. But, as anthropologists have slowly come to realize, it is only certain of their beliefs and some of the more striking aspects of these cults that are strange, the logic behind them being clearly understandable within the context both of Melanesian life and the history of religion.

The cargo cults are generally thought to have started, sometime around the 1880s, in Fiji, and since then their pattern has remained roughly the same. Out of nowhere, as it were, a prophet appears and predicts imminent salvation, which may take the form of the islanders' ancestors returning on a ship; a ship that is also loaded with consumer goods like refrigerators, radio sets, desks, furniture, and other items like canned food and even jeeps. The prophet orders various kinds of ritual observances, including such activities as building a warehouse or a jetty (to receive the ship and its goods), or houses for the returning ancestors; the destruction of property or livestock; sexual abstinence; or throwing money into the sea.

When the day of doom arrives and nothing happens, the prophet may try to slip away, or he stays and tries to explain what happened. Maybe he will blame the mischief of others, particularly supernatural beings; maybe he will blame the white men who were to have brought the cargo; maybe he will claim that the day of doom is merely delayed.

Although not all these elements are present in any particular cult, there are a number of common factors. There is always at least one prophet, sometimes several. They are usually men, though women do occasionally appear in this role. The description 'cargo cults' also indicates that the idea of ship's cargo – in the sense of western trading goods as they are known to the Melanesian islanders – is almost universally present. Often, in more recent years, the cargo is expected to arrive in an aeroplane, and the natives may build a primitive airstrip.

In some cults, the participants have tried to use their money to buy President Roosevelt or, more recently, President Johnson, presumably because these men symbolized powerful magic, and owning them would transfer this power to the Melanesians.

Whatever the details, there is a general pattern to these cults which justifies their

Member of a cargo cult sitting by a red cross in the hope of bringing back the Red Cross planes which flew medical supplies to the Pacific islands during World War II

classification as a special type of millenarian religion.

Scholars seem to have taken some time to realize that belief in imminent redemption is a common feature of human religion, and that cults of this kind are therefore not unique. Originally, it seems, they were interpreted as some kind of collective madness or irrationality. And indeed, it must have been very puzzling for a colonial official to walk up to a village and find it organized as a crude parody of a European police compound, with the local inhabitants wearing scraps of western costume and checking 'passes', at the village 'gate'. Inside they would be sitting at tables, surrounded by toy imitations of paper and writing equipment.

Communist Plots?

A more sinister interpretation given to the cults, based purely on the misunderstanding of a phrase ('Masinga Rule', the name of a cult), was that they were some sort of Marxist plot. Articles in the journal of the civil servants of the Melanesian region argued that the cargo cults were a cloak for Communist or Marxist penetration. A more plausible variant of this theory – this time coming not from conservative colonial officials but from anthropologists who have lived with the cultists – is that the cults are a form of colonial rebellion expressed in a religious manner.

There is certainly more in this latter than in many previous theories. Fundamentally, these cults can be explained as attempts to

organize social change. The Melanesians live in technologically simple societies in relatively fertile areas of the world. There is no population problem and no pressure on the land and game resources. However, over the past two centuries the islands were steadily penetrated by traders, colonizers and missionaries. The natives were used as labourers by the planters and traders, and

Inhabitants of Tanna, Vanuatu, believe that a white leader, Jon Frum, will arrive with 'cargo' in a scarlet plane, and drive the white man from the island with the help of an army waiting for him in the crater of a volcano. Cult rituals involve erecting scarlet crosses and gates: shrine with a white-faced figure of Jon Frum, and the plane that will bring him to the island



introduced to such consumer goods as clothes, axes, lamps and the like. They were administered by officials under laws which bore very little relation to their tribal customs, in languages they did not understand, and were coaxed or pressured into accepting white men's religions.

The most important lesson that the Melanesians learnt from this was that the white men are powerful people, with warehouses full of marvellous goods and clothing, which they will give in exchange only for money, not for the goods and obligations of kinship which govern transactions in native society. White men know how to organize people into police forces and church congregations and sanitary villages. White men claim to know about another

world where the ancestors are waiting and where all will be bliss and peace if only their rituals are observed.

What can the native reaction possibly be to all this? They would like to *be* white men. Or they would like white men to be more like them, to join them rather than to rule them. Or they would like to *replace* white men and even reverse roles. Or they would like to take from white men what they have, and drive them out.

What changed the usual course of political events, and the Melanesians' understanding of the way the world works, is the arrival and continued presence of the whites. They envy the whites' access to goods but, unlike these powerful foreigners, who hold on to their goods, budding

Melanesian leaders only want the cargo in order to be able to redistribute it and so gain followers.

Secrets of the White Men

At first Melanesians tried to gain access to the goods by converting to Christianity and ascending the ecclesiastical hierarchy, as catechists or pastors. When that did not lead to their becoming wealthy, some claimed that the missionaries were withholding the 'secret' of the cargo from them. So they left the Church and started their own; and since these would-be leaders already had gained prized knowledge of white ways, people were prepared to listen to them, and sometimes join with them.

If the cargo, or the Apocalypse, did not come, then they could choose to stay with the cult, return to their traditional religion or to Christianity, or join another cult.

Some Melanesians move from one church to another, changing cult or denomination several times in the course of their lives. The cumulative result of this is that the people of certain areas of Melanesia have fragmented into a bewildering variety of churches and cults. For instance, on the one island of Tanna, Vanuatu, which has less than 13,000 inhabitants, there are at least ten different religions: traditional, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, the Assembly of God, the Church of Christ, the Seventh-Day Adventists, the Four Corners Movement, the Blue Cross Movement, the Jon Frum cult, and those who believe that HRH the Duke of Edinburgh is in reality a native of Tanna, and will one day return to his island home.

In recent years, as the level of western education among Melanesians has risen, and increasing numbers have gained a broader understanding of European ways, the number of people joining cults is declining; those who wish to gain the benefits formerly exclusive to the whites can now join political parties, start their own (sometimes highly-successful) businesses, or begin to rise through the ranks of the national bureaucracy.

Now that these well-educated members of Melanesian society know how the western world works, they no longer need to express their discontent in religious forms. But, as the history of religion shows, that is no reason why cargo cults should not suddenly rise up again in the future.

I.C. JARVIE*

FURTHER READING: For a general work on millenarianism, see K. Burrige, *New Heaven, New Earth* (Schocken, 1969); for accounts of cults in single areas, L. Lindstrom, *Knowledge and Power in a South Pacific Society* (Smithsonian, 1990) and P. Lawrence, *Roads Belong Cargo* (Manchester, 1967); for a thorough survey of literature up to 1957, with Marxist interpretation, Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound* (Schocken, 1968).

Above left Scarlet cross on a runway built by the Jon Frum cult **Left** Gates and lines of sticks making a magical airstrip on the fields of volcanic ash surrounding the island's volcano



Federico Patellani

David Attenborough

CAROLE

MEANING A CIRCLE of dancers holding hands or opening into a linked chain, the word 'carole' comes from the Greek *choros*, originally used to describe singing and dancing on a circular threshing floor at the antique festival of Dionysus, which afterwards became the circle of the chorus in the Greek theatre. The Evzones, the crack Greek guards, dance the Kalamatianos, a modern ring and chain, the skirts of their uniforms swirling as they move, while the Trata, the maidens' dance at Megara in Greece on Easter Tuesday, is an open chain.

But ring and chain dances are known all over the world, and spring from ritual practices in use long before their appearance in Greece. The Greeks themselves sought the origin of the ring and chain in the dance led by Theseus, in imitation of the windings of the labyrinth in which he had slain the man-beast, the Minotaur. But the dance existed many centuries before Theseus was thought of.

A Bronze Age vase from the Lac de Bourget, in Savoy, shows a chain of four people holding hands. The famous Liria vase of c300 BC shows a chain of four women and three men, all holding hands, led by two pipers. And a chain dance is painted on the famous François vase in the Etrurian Museum in Florence.

Earlier still, archeological finds dated c2600 BC, in Elam (a country in what is now Iran), show women holding hands in a chain, while yet earlier, on a rock drawing in a valley north of Luxor in Egypt, seven girls hold hands in a chain. These are the 'feather head-dress people' who were in Egypt before 3400 BC.

The Dreaded Carmagnole

In present-day Bulgaria the C of *chorus* has been dropped and the Hora circle can embrace a whole village community; in Rumania the Hora is danced as a sign of entry into manhood by the boys, and of readiness for marriage by the girls. It is also a test of character, the circle dissolving instantly if a badly behaved person tries to join it. In Yugoslavia, it may expand to take as many as 500 dancers. Here it has become Kolo, the Wheel. Some variations are danced without music, to the rhythmic thud of feet.

Provence has the Farandole, an open carole, which the Provençals believe was introduced by the Greek colonists when they founded Marseilles, but they do not know enough of their own history, for the dance can be traced much further back. The Farandole is a carole which is in fact danced all along the Mediterranean coasts of both France and Spain. In Spain the closed ring is called the Sardana and the open chain the Contrapas. The Farandole winds up the French Catalan valleys to the tune called Carmagnole, a tune dreaded in Revolutionary days when the people took their chain dance to Paris. It continued there and on its home ground into the time of Napoleon, when a Bonapartist general was caught and killed in the coils of a



Carmagnole-Farandole danced in the streets of Toulon.

In Spain the dance appears in Andorra as the Bal Pla, starting as a closed ring, and finishing in a Farandole which fills the village square. The carnival season in the French district of Aude ends with a Galop Infernal, an infernal Farandole indeed, rushing through the streets.

The Basque country has the Dantza Khorda, the String dance, the first and last men carrying bouquets as insignia of office. The Spanish Basques over the frontier have their Aurésku, a ceremonial chain dance for festival days, and we find it again in Asturias as Dantza Prima.

Working its way north the carole is found in Switzerland under its early name, Coraule, in the Gruyere country; north again in the Walloon region of Belgium as Coródes, Longue Dance and Cramignon, accompanied by singing, the leader carrying a bouquet as in the Basque country. The carole passes into the Netherlands, again as the Cramignon, where the captain of the Young Men's Society leads the chain in and out of houses and inns, a bouquet in one hand. Further north still the chain wound its way in Danish castles and courts to singing:

There danced the maidens with hair unbound,
It was the King's daughters sang the Round.

Today in the Faroe Islands the islanders begin a ring to enliven long, winter nights, one man singing, more and more joining in, until the ring must break into a chain

Witches at their Sabbaths traditionally performed the ring and chain dance moving to the left, against the sun; angels were believed to dance the carole in heaven. Modern witches performing a ring dance

which then develops with twists and curves.

Sweden prizes the Long Dance around flaming tar barrels on Easter Eve or around the Midsummer pole. To keep warm, the dancers may continue for hours, the line running from farm to farm. Norway also cherishes the song-dance, often in circular form, and Iceland possesses similar ballad-chains, while Finland carols in long chains and big rings around the Midsummer pole.

The Holly and the Ivy

England has nearly lost the chain but has kept the ring in the various 'church clip-pings' (as at Painswick), in such country dances as Gathering Peascods and Sellenger's Round, danced on moonlit nights about maypoles. Both forms have descended to children in various singing games, such as Round the Mulberry Bush or Looby Loo, while In and Out the Windows is a single-file children's version of the celebrated Helston Furry Dance (see CHILDREN'S GAMES). This form gave rise to the processional 'contra' dance, called 'contry' in the United States and often confused with forms of country dancing.

Country dancing, better known as 'square dancing', has found a new vogue in America. It descends from the chain dance through intermediate stages such as the



Angels dancing in the gardens of Paradise: detail from Fra Angelico's *The Last Judgement*

Kentuckian 'running sets', performed in squares or circles of four or more couples. Modern square dancing demands an expert caller, who guides the sets of dancers through often complex and intricate chain figures.

The medieval carole was the most popular dance for over three centuries. We hear of it again and again – of holiday makers borrowing finery 'in Carol to go', of noble ladies and gallants, country folk and church dignitaries, all carolling in castles, on village greens and in cathedrals. Paintings show chains in beautiful gardens, and in heaven, formed by angels who are sometimes welcoming a new soul into the paradise ring. Yet, as always happened when a dance became over-popular, it was censured

by the Church and disallowed by the priests who punished the dancers. Carolling was forbidden until Mass was over, for the churchyard was used as a dancing ground. In the 14th century we hear of the dancers of Kolbigk in Germany setting their chain in motion on Christmas morning while Mass was still being celebrated. By some unseen power they were condemned to encircle the church for a year without respite. From the 16th century onwards dancing gave way to singing in churches, resulting in our present use of the word 'carol' for sung seasonal verse, like our widely popular Christmas carols.

Witches at their sabbaths always enjoyed dancing, and used both ring and chain. The ring was said to have been performed facing outwards and moved widdershins, that is, to the left and against the direction of the sun, therefore adversely influencing the fertility of crops, since witches were thought to do all the harm they could. The chain was led by the chief or priest of the witch coven, who moved off so quickly that there had to be a 'rear man' to beat up the laggards. Those who fell out had to limp home alone.

VIOLET ALFORD

FURTHER READING: V. Alford and R. Gallop, *The Traditional Dance* (Methuen, London, 1935); C. Sachs, *World History of the Dance* (Norton, 1963).

In Hindu India your behaviour in previous lives determines your social status in this one. The caste system remains an important factor in the life of a modern state

CASTE

CASTE IS A TERM applied to social units which rank in a hierarchic order and within which there is a minimum of social mobility. The word caste appeared first as *casta*, a term by which the Portuguese travellers of the 15th century referred to the divisions of Indian society. Although some modern sociologists speak of 'caste-like' categories, with reference to the rigid sections of societies divided along lines of colour, race or class, caste in the narrow sense of the term is a system that is confined to Indian culture.

Unlike the classes of Western societies and the racial elements of such societies as the United States and South Africa, the Indian castes have their roots in a system of ideas which claims religious sanction for the division of humanity into a number of inherently different groups. This is an essential part of the Hindu outlook and the system of castes is thus a religious as well as a social phenomenon.

It is based on the idea that men are born with different spiritual qualities which result largely from their actions in previous existences, and that the qualities of members of one caste are essentially different



Camera Press London

from those of members of others. Membership of a caste is seen as a spiritual condition which remains unchangeable during a lifetime, though merit or demerit acquired in one life can affect a man's or woman's status in a future rebirth. The idea of reincarnation is inseparable from the religious foundations of the caste system.

In ancient India the caste system in its present complex form had not yet developed, but the social order reflected in the Vedic hymns, the oldest part of the sacred Sanskrit literature, involved a division of society into categories or estates: the so-called *varna* (literally 'colours'). Though this fourfold division of society was to become the framework for the rank-order of castes, it was very different from the castes of modern India. The order of *varna* consisted of four categories, the highest being that of Brahmins (priests). Below them ranked the Kshatriyas (warriors), next came the Vaisyas (merchants and husbandmen) and the lowest were the Sudras (menial artisans, labourers and servants).

A creation myth contained in a Vedic

The highest ranking groups in ancient India were the Brahmins (priests) and the Kshatriyas (warriors), who were called 'twice-born' because they went through a special initiation ceremony which was regarded as a second birth. Spiritual power was reserved to the priests, political power to the warriors. *Left* Brahmin outside a temple in southern India *Below* Kshatriyas in battle, from the Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*



hymn ascribes this division of humanity to the very beginning of the present world-age. Purusha, an original divine being whose immense body filled the whole universe, was sacrificed by the gods in such a manner that the parts of his body transformed themselves into the various elements of the creation: his mouth turned into the first Brahmin, his arms into Kshatriya warriors, and the lower parts of his body into Vaisyas and Sudras.

The Twice-Born

In Vedic times there was still some mobility between these four categories and marriages between Brahmins and Kshatriyas were not unusual. The members of the three higher ranks were described as 'twice-born', because young males of these groups underwent an initiation rite, regarded as a 'second birth', which admitted them to the religious life. The Sudras, the lowest order, were excluded from most ritual activities and they were not allowed to study the sacred Vedic texts.

The system of varna was codified in one of the earliest Indian law books, the code of Manu, which specified the functions of the members of the four categories and regulated relations between them. This codification coincided with a hardening of the divisions of Hindu society and the mobility between the varna disappeared. The differentiation in the rights and duties of the members of the four estates became more pronounced. Manu laid down that all actions should be judged according to the status of the doer, and men of high status were not only accorded many privileges but also had obligations. A higher standard of behaviour was expected from them than from men of low birth, and those of high status who were guilty of certain offences were to be punished more severely than men of lower rank who had committed identical crimes.

The laws of Manu also determined the relations between Brahmins and Kshatriyas, priests and secular rulers. Whereas in ancient times Indian princes had the right to perform religious functions, Kshatriyas were now deprived of all their religious prerogatives, such as the right to conduct sacrifices, and were subordinated to the spiritual power of Brahmin priests (see also BRAHMAN). But the supremacy of the Brahmins' spiritual power was never expressed in the political sphere, and in this the Kshatriyas ruled supreme.

The fourfold division of society into the hierarchically ranked varna extended over the whole of India, and provided a model for the structure of Hindu society. From about 300 BC onwards numerous castes or *jati* developed within the varna framework. These were social groups whose members married only among themselves. This is one of the most characteristic features of the system. Each caste is a closed social group with distinctive customs and ritual practices, strict dietary rules and occupational preferences. From birth the individual is provided with a fixed social milieu, from which no vicissitude of fate can remove him, unless he violates the rules of his caste to such a degree that he is either temporarily or

permanently excommunicated or 'outcasted'. His caste determines his choice of partner in marriage, and frequently his occupation, acts as his trade union and prescribes his religious practices. Most castes are subdivided, and it is within the local sub-caste that a man or woman generally finds most social contacts.

While each caste and sub-caste is a largely self-contained unit, there is a pronounced interdependence of castes, which render each other numerous services in both the religious and economic spheres. For instance, Brahmins act as family priests for all individuals belonging to the twice-born castes, while members of many lower castes have their prescribed roles in the ritual practices of a village community. Economically, because of the occupational specialization of castes in traditional Indian society, no one group can dispense with the services of the other social groups.

The Pure and the Impure

But despite this interdependence, there are strict rules limiting the relations between members of castes of different status. Basic to the system is the belief in the unequal degree of ritual purity attaching to the various groups. Hindus hold that certain types of contact, such as eating with a member of a lower caste or even accepting water from his hands, defiles a man of higher status and the avoidance of such polluting contacts and the maintenance of ritual purity is a constant preoccupation with Indians of high caste. Many occasions expose a man or woman to pollution.

There is, in addition, the underlying belief that impurity prevails over purity. While the purity of persons of high caste is diminished by contact with members of the lower groups, the latter do not enhance their purity if they are touched by a high-caste person.

Conformity to every detail of the rules which regulate the conduct of caste-members is considered the supreme virtue in a Hindu. A violation of the rules, even if committed accidentally, may result in dire consequences. Thus a Brahmin who unknowingly partakes of the food cooked by a person of low status loses his ritual purity and with it his own caste status.

Hindu society sees the individual not so much as an independent agent, guided in his conduct by the promptings of his own conscience, but as the member of a tightly organized community whose actions affect not only his own status but also that of those closest to him. For an individual's wrong conduct can cause a chain reaction. By incurring pollution, a man in turn pollutes the innocent members of his household, and may affect even kinsmen and friends who, ignorant of his lowered ritual status, accept food prepared in his house. Because the pollution that results from certain offences against caste rules is automatic and contagious, no group can afford to permit freedom to the individual in the regulation of his life.

Caste members are therefore critical of deviations from the narrow path of orthodox behaviour on the part of other individuals

in the group, and even close kinsmen will disown a family member who has lost status by contact with a person of lower caste. The breach of a rule, such as the taboo on the eating of certain types of meat, or the ban on sexual congress with lower caste partners, is regarded as a social offence as well as a sin.

The Untouchables

Actions permissible for members of one caste are wrong for those of another, and instead of a universally applicable moral code there are as many different standards of behaviour as there are castes.

The lowest castes, including artisans doing polluting work such as tanning leather working and scavenging, are everywhere regarded as 'untouchable', and bodily contact or even proximity to them pollutes members of clean castes. Though public discrimination against untouchables is now illegal, they still form an under-privileged class, which in many parts of India comprises a large percentage of the population.

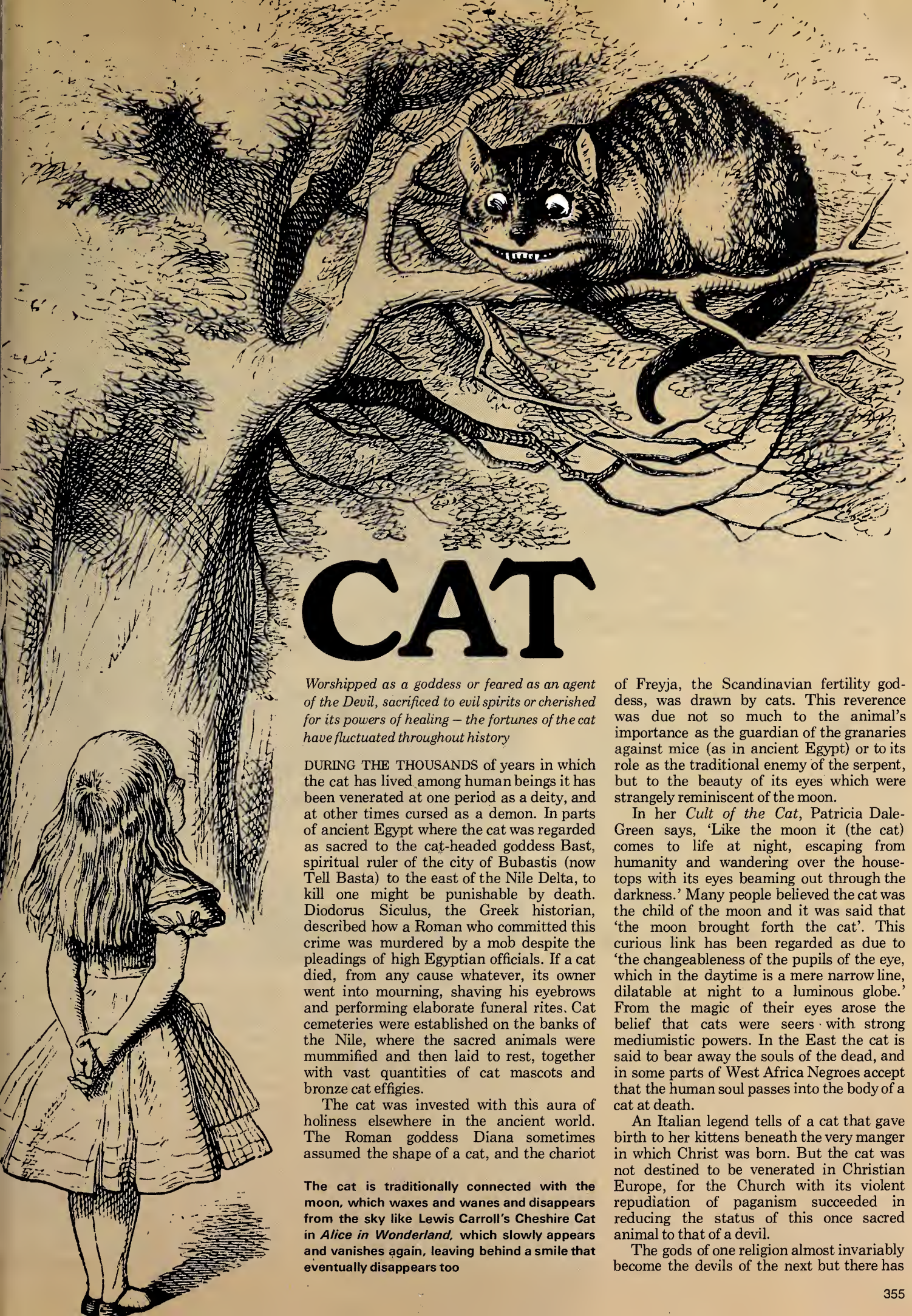
Castes and sub-castes have elaborate organizations with caste councils and caste headmen, and these exert a considerable degree of discipline over the members. The importance of this system in the social structure of India can hardly be exaggerated: the overwhelming majority of the Hindu population takes the hierarchy of castes for granted, and considers it part of a world order closely integrated with orthodox Hindu religion.

Religious reformers through the ages have attempted to abolish these social distinctions, but they have had no lasting effect, and sects which preached the equality of man ended up as closed groups similar to castes – and are now regarded as such by the rest of Hindu society. However, although the caste system has made for a static and conservative society, it has at the same time facilitated the integration of many groups of different origin, each of which has retained many of its social and religious practices and traditions. In this way the cultural independence of small groups has been respected even though they are incorporated into the greater Indian society.

Throughout the centuries the system of castes has provided a basis, and an ideological justification, for the coexistence of different ethnic and cultural groups as well as for the mutual tolerance of a great number of communities with distinct religious and social customs.

Despite official attempts to create an egalitarian society in which caste privileges have no legally recognized place, the continued persistence of castes as distinct social units within Indian society can be predicted with a high degree of probability. In recent years the religious aspects of the system have somewhat receded into the background, but the castes have gained a new function as political pressure groups, whose cohesion and strength are rooted in the traditional solidarity of their members. Thus an ancient social order, derived originally from mythological and religious concepts, survives in a changed form in the public life of a modern state.

CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF



CAT

Worshipped as a goddess or feared as an agent of the Devil, sacrificed to evil spirits or cherished for its powers of healing — the fortunes of the cat have fluctuated throughout history

DURING THE THOUSANDS of years in which the cat has lived, among human beings it has been venerated at one period as a deity, and at other times cursed as a demon. In parts of ancient Egypt where the cat was regarded as sacred to the cat-headed goddess Bast, spiritual ruler of the city of Bubastis (now Tell Basta) to the east of the Nile Delta, to kill one might be punishable by death. Diodorus Siculus, the Greek historian, described how a Roman who committed this crime was murdered by a mob despite the pleadings of high Egyptian officials. If a cat died, from any cause whatever, its owner went into mourning, shaving his eyebrows and performing elaborate funeral rites. Cat cemeteries were established on the banks of the Nile, where the sacred animals were mummified and then laid to rest, together with vast quantities of cat mascots and bronze cat effigies.

The cat was invested with this aura of holiness elsewhere in the ancient world. The Roman goddess Diana sometimes assumed the shape of a cat, and the chariot

The cat is traditionally connected with the moon, which waxes and wanes and disappears from the sky like Lewis Carroll's Cheshire Cat in *Alice in Wonderland*, which slowly appears and vanishes again, leaving behind a smile that eventually disappears too

of Freyja, the Scandinavian fertility goddess, was drawn by cats. This reverence was due not so much to the animal's importance as the guardian of the granaries against mice (as in ancient Egypt) or to its role as the traditional enemy of the serpent, but to the beauty of its eyes which were strangely reminiscent of the moon.

In her *Cult of the Cat*, Patricia Dale-Green says, 'Like the moon it (the cat) comes to life at night, escaping from humanity and wandering over the rooftops with its eyes beaming out through the darkness.' Many people believed the cat was the child of the moon and it was said that 'the moon brought forth the cat'. This curious link has been regarded as due to 'the changeableness of the pupils of the eye, which in the daytime is a mere narrow line, dilatable at night to a luminous globe.' From the magic of their eyes arose the belief that cats were seers with strong mediumistic powers. In the East the cat is said to bear away the souls of the dead, and in some parts of West Africa Negroes accept that the human soul passes into the body of a cat at death.

An Italian legend tells of a cat that gave birth to her kittens beneath the very manger in which Christ was born. But the cat was not destined to be venerated in Christian Europe, for the Church with its violent repudiation of paganism succeeded in reducing the status of this once sacred animal to that of a devil.

The gods of one religion almost invariably become the devils of the next but there has

Cats have always aroused strong human emotions, some people adoring them and others detesting them. Both reactions appear in folklore and nursery rhymes, where the cat may play an attractive role, as in 'Puss in Boots' or 'The Cat and the Fiddle' (*below*); or it may be a creature of evil and the companion of witches (*right*). One of the witches executed at Lincoln in 1618 said that she saw her mother's familiar spirit, 'the cat Rutterkin leap on her shoulder and suck her neck.' Three other witches who were involved are shown (*bottom*) with their familiars, a kitten, an owl, a mouse and a dog



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library



Mansell Collection



rarely been so dramatic a fall from grace as that of the once holy cat. During the persecution of the heretical sect of the Cathars the belief was fostered that these heretics had worshipped the Devil in feline form, and the stage was set for the cat's unwitting participation in the witchcraft tragedy.

In the Middle Ages the English scholar Gervase of Tilbury stated a popular belief when he wrote, '...women have been seen and wounded in the shape of cats by persons who were secretly on the watch and... the next day the women have shown wounds and loss of limbs.' In 1718, towards the end of the witchcraft mania in the British Isles, William Montgomery of Caithness, driven berserk by a vast crowd of cats which gossiped outside his house in

human language, attacked them, hatchet in hand, killing two and wounding others. On the following day, two old women were found dead in bed while another had an unexplained gash in her leg, proof that both had changed shape during the night.

At the height of the witchcraft delusion it was generally assumed that a witch could take the shape of a cat only nine times, presumably because of the belief that a cat had nine lives.

More often, cats were given the comparatively minor role of witches' familiars. The villain of one of the first important trials of English witches, in 1566, was a white spotted cat called Sathan, which fed on its mistress's blood. The cruelties inflicted upon a cat caught in the mesh of witchcraft

could be dreadful, for the wretched animal was likely to be burned alive, both in England and on the Continent.

Some people have an intense fear of cats, and in the 17th century Increase Mather, the celebrated New England Puritan divine, observed, 'There are some who, if a cat accidentally comes into a room, though they neither see of it nor are told of it, will presently be in a sweat and ready to die away.' It was generally assumed that if a cat was allowed near a corpse it would steal the soul, and the dead person would then become a vampire. Vampire cats were common in Japan, but were easily recognizable, as they had two tails.

One superstition, hardly extinct today, held that cats crept into the cradle to suck

the breath of young babies. Nursemaids stood permanent guard against them.

In parts of Europe where many of the old pagan ceremonies were preserved relatively unchanged, a cat often personified the spirit of the corn. At Briançon in France a cat ceremonially garbed in ribbons, flowers and corn ears presided at the harvest, while near Amiens one of these animals was ritually killed when the last sheaves of corn were cut. It was customary to roast cats alive to drive away evil spirits at the European Easter and Shrove Tuesday fire ceremonies. In the English Guy Fawkes celebrations sacks of living cats were placed on the bonfires.

Until the close of the 18th century black cats were burned alive in the Highlands of Scotland, in a ceremony called *Taigheirin*, to secure from the gods the gift of second sight; and the Irish Hellfire Club is said to have celebrated one of its orgies by igniting a huge tomcat.

Almost as unfortunate was any kitten born in the month of May. Rarely a good hunter, it would bring home glow-worms and snakes instead of mice and, because of this, was usually drowned. Needless to say its 'melancholy disposition' made it easily recognizable.

Lore of the Black Cat

Legendary lore has had a particularly dramatic influence on feline fortunes. In Britain the 'blackberry' cat's reputation for devilment and mischief is due solely to the fact that it is born at the end of the blackberry season, this being the time of year when, according to an old tradition, Satan was thrown out of heaven into a blackberry bush (which he then defiled with his urine and spittle).

The sins of the blackberry cat pale into insignificance when compared with those of the black cat which, in the United States and most of Europe, is regarded as the embodiment of the Devil himself. In Britain, it is the white cat who plays this role. The brindled cat was notorious in England as the familiar of the witch, hence the witches' cry in *Macbeth*, 'Thrice the brindled cat hath mewed', while the black cat, generally speaking, symbolizes magic minus malice.

Even today cat lore, particularly the correct approach to the black variety, is extremely complicated. The black cat should be gently stroked along the spine and never chased away, or it will take the luck of the home with it. To come across such an animal out of doors is highly favourable in most parts of Britain, but in Yorkshire, as in the United States, it is unlucky; at the same time it is lucky to own a black cat.

One supernatural skill attributed to these animals is their ability to forecast the weather. When cats scamper wildly it means wind; when they wash their ears, rain; and when they sit with their backs to the fire, frost or storms. The Indonesians believe that it is possible to produce rain by pouring water over a cat.

Observers in the past have tried to rationalize the weather-forecasting element in

the feline make-up. An early attempt suggested that 'the moisture which is in the air before the rain, insinuating itself into the fur of this animal, moves her to smoothe the same and cover the body with it so that she may feel less the inconvenience of Winter as on the contrary she opens her fur in Summer that she may better receive the refreshing of the moist season.'

The cat has always been credited with that most important function of divinity, the art of healing. The instrument for this is its tail, which will cure a 'queff' or styne if drawn downwards over the eye, while the following charm is recited:

I poke thee. I don't poke thee.

I poke the queff that's under the eye.

O qualyway, O qualyway.

'Tail cure' is equally effective in the treatment of warts, whitloes and the itch. Catskin properly dried and applied to the face is believed to relieve toothache, and in the 17th century a whole cat boiled in olive oil was thought to make a first-class dressing for wounds. If a disease resisted ordinary methods of treatment it was at one time customary to transfer it to the family cat, by dousing the animal with the patient's washing water and driving it from the house. When any member of the family was ill, the cat's every movement might be scrutinized for signs and portents. Its leaving home was an omen of death.

It was noticed that cats were extremely sensitive to the presence of an unburied body in the house, and that they left home

immediately someone died, returning only after the funeral. A cat that stood its ground but was caught leaping over the coffin was always killed at once, as such behaviour was thought to bode ill for the prospects of the departed in the hereafter.

Prophetic Sneezes

When signs of sickness first showed themselves in the family cat, its every sneeze was awaited with the keenest interest. A single sneeze, near a bride on her wedding morning, forecast a happy marriage, but on other occasions it might portend rain. Three sneezes in succession were a warning that the whole household would suffer colds in the near future.

It was a rule in many households that a sick or dying cat be put out of the house, to prevent death from spreading through the family. When moving house in the north-east of England it was traditional to abandon the family cat in order to preserve the luck.

Seamen were invariably kind to a cat, believing that it brought luck to any ship it boarded. In addition cats were infallible weather guides and were thought to be invaluable when a ship was becalmed, as a wind could be raised by placing a cat under a pot on the deck. To throw a cat overboard, particularly if it were black and without a single white hair, was unthinkable, since this could cause a storm.

Actors also welcome cats, regarding their presence as a good omen, and they believe that kicking a cat causes the worst possible luck. But if a cat runs across the stage during a performance, it is thought to be an extremely ominous sign.

A great many cat superstitions and fears have survived in the United States. The lore of the Old South tends to see the cat as a devil, a witch, a witch's imp – but at the same time its whiskers were often used in 'conjure' magic and charms. Southern belief also says that if you kick a cat you will get rheumatism, and if you drown a cat the Devil will get you. Yet a broth made from boiling a black cat was believed to cure consumption. New Englanders long believed that they could tell time from a cat's eyes, for the pupils supposedly contracted at low tide, dilated at high tide. Pennsylvanians boiled black cats to keep the Devil at bay; Ozarkians, afraid to kill a cat, might chop off its paw and throw it out of the house.

In modern times, although the cat has not yet recovered its lost status as a goddess, there have been other compensations. Television stardom has come its way and it would sometimes appear that the entire economic life of the nation is geared to the production of its food. Yet, quite unspoiled, the cat remains serene, civilized, god-like and utterly mysterious.

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: Patricia Dale-Green, *Cult of the Cat* (Houghton, Mifflin, 1963).

The cat was sacred to the Egyptian goddess Bast. Cemeteries containing the bodies of mummified sacred cats have been discovered with bronze statues of cats, like this one which is dated to c600 BC



William MacQuitty

The attempt to suppress these heretics, who believed in chastity, poverty and simple piety, led to the founding of the Inquisition and the first crusade ever to be fought inside Europe

CATHARS

THE CATHARS, also known as the Albigenses (from the town of Albi, north-east of Toulouse), were a powerful religious sect which flourished in the 12th and 13th centuries, chiefly in southern France and northern Italy. In their own eyes, they were the only true Christians, and nearer than the Roman Catholic Church to the tradition of the early Christians, both in the life of chastity, poverty and simple piety which they lived and preached, and in their organization and ritual. But their theology, based on a dualistic belief in an evil principle in the universe which limited God's power, was heretical; and the fact that they were well organized, and that their zealous missionaries gained many converts posed a serious threat to the Church of Rome, whose authority and sacraments they rejected and whose hierarchy they condemned.

For more than 50 years the Roman Church tolerated Catharism, which first appeared in western Europe about the year 1140. During these years, Catharism spread so rapidly that divisions and differences developed inside the movement itself. But by the turn of the century the Church felt compelled to act against the heresy, and in 1208 Pope Innocent III declared a Crusade against the Cathars, which led to a merciless war lasting 20 years.

After the Treaty of Meaux in 1229, which ended the war, the Cathars carried on an underground struggle against the Inquisition, which was instituted by Pope Gregory IX for the express purpose of rooting out the heresy (see HERESY). The massacre of some 200 Cathars at Montségur in the Pyrenees in 1244 was a disaster from which the movement never recovered.

From Eastern Roots

The origins of Catharism lie in the old beliefs of Gnosticism and Manicheism, which grew up outside Europe, and the heresy reached France and Italy from the Balkans and Asia Minor. Their name, derived from the Greek word for 'pure', shows that the contemporaries of the Cathars regarded them as in some way connected with the Eastern Orthodox branch of Christianity. Their fundamental dualism, as well as many points of detail in their practices and beliefs, prove that the Cathars were originally a western offshoot of the Bogomils (see BOGOMILS).

Between the 4th and the 10th centuries, the Western Church had been free from any serious heretical movements but in the 11th century, with the revival of trade, signs of religious agitation began to appear.

In the 12th century this religious ferment gathered force and, as one authority on medieval Europe puts it, 'Europe was swarming with hermits, wandering preachers and foot-loose monks.' The mood of the age

was favourable to Catharism but the specific factors behind its rapid spread are uncertain. The eastern doctrines on which it was based probably filtered in from the East at first along the trade routes, so that it may have reached Lombardy in northern Italy first, and from there penetrated France and the Rhineland. This process was probably hastened by the persecution of the Bogomils in Constantinople in 1110 and 1140.

Already by this time we hear that in the south-west of France the Cathars were so well established that the Roman Catholic churches were empty. The Cathars were now apparently an organized Church with their own hierarchy, ritual and system of doctrine. By 1149 they had their first bishop in the north of France. In 1167 the Bogomil

Bishop Nicetas came from Constantinople to visit Lombardy and southern France. He summoned a Council of Cathar bishops and ministers at St Felix de Caraman, near Toulouse, apparently to assert the true Bogomil faith and to establish new bishoprics. By the end of the 12th century no less

Below Long and rigorous training prepared the 'perfect', the initiates who formed the elite of the Cathar sect, to suffer torture and death rather than betray their faith: two condemned Cathars awaiting execution, from a painting by P. Berruguete *Right St Dominic, who preached with great fervour against the Cathars, watches the burning of heretical books: 'good' books rise, untouched, from the fire. Painting by P. Berruguete*





than 11 Cathar bishoprics had been established, five in France and six in Italy.

The Cathars were not confined to France and Italy. By c 1150 they were established in Germany, particularly around Cologne, and in 1162 a German-led Cathar mission arrived in England. They were branded on the forehead and expelled from the country.

The Monster of Chaos

The Cathar philosophy was based on dualism, the belief that two opposed powers or principles are active in the universe. Most of the Cathars seem to have regarded the evil principle as weaker, or somehow less real, than the good. Yet the good principle, or God, was not all-powerful. He suffered the hostility of an evil power which he had not himself created or willed, and his power was limited in other ways. 'Without doubt, God cannot lie,' said Jean de Lugio, a leading Cathar apologist, when challenged to give an example of something that God cannot do.

The evil being, which was sometimes known as the Monster of Chaos, in some way partook of the nature of man, fish, bird and beast. But at the same time, it was a spirit 'which had no beginning'. The being had various physical forms: matter, chaos, darkness, Lucifer and Satan. According to the usual Cathar view, Satan had created the material world and the flesh, and man's task was to liberate his spirit, the good part of him, from its material envelope. The material world would eventually pass away altogether. God's creation of celestial and eternal things was contrasted with Satan's creation of what was material and transitory. The evil principle, however, was eternal – only its effects would perish in time.

Christ as a Phantom

The Cathar teaching about Christ has survived mainly in its negative aspects. Christ appeared in our world merely as a phantom. His mission was to teach the doctrine of salvation set out in the gospels and to warn mankind that the god of the Old Testament was really a demon who had created the material world.

Christ's true mission, however, had been accomplished elsewhere, in 'superior worlds', and his crucifixion in this world was fictitious. Some Cathars said that the crucifixion was an image of torture inflicted in another world on the demon who had created the world. The Cathars condemned the cult of the cross and, like the Bogomils, maintained that the cross had been made of the wood of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. The Cathars were accused of denying that Christ was the son of the Virgin Mary, and in the eyes of their contemporaries the most scandalous part of their doctrine was the denial that the human body is resurrected after death.

There were two classes of Cathars, the 'perfect' (*Perfecti*) also known as 'bons-hommes' or 'ancients', and the 'believers'. The 'perfect' formed the hierarchy of the Cathar Church, and the 'believers' were the rank and file. The 'perfect' underwent a long and rigorous initiation which culminated in a religious ceremony, the *consolamentum*,

which was the Cathar equivalent of the Christian baptism, confirmation and ordination of a priest, all rolled into one.

The *consolamentum* was conducted before a large audience in a room which had a table in the middle, spread with a spotless white cloth, on which lay a copy of the New Testament. A Cathar 'ancient' addressed the candidate in a series of special formulas. The candidate confessed his sins and renounced this world and its works, ending with a solemn promise to give himself to God and to the gospel, never to lie or swear an oath, never again to touch a woman, to eat only vegetables and fish, and never to travel or pass the night or take food without a companion of the same sex.

The training the 'perfect' received prepared them to endure torture rather than betray their faith, and history shows that many of them went willingly to atrocious deaths. Their enemies accused them of being favourably disposed towards suicide.

Not every Cathar felt able to take the vows of sexual abstinence and extreme asceticism that were required of the 'perfect', and many waited until they were on their death-beds before receiving the *consolamentum*, which then took the place of the Christian rite of extreme unction. There were, however, other religious ceremonies, such as the *apparelliammentum*, a monthly public confession of sins before one of the 'perfect', and simple services at which the Lord's Prayer was recited and hymns sung.

Although the austere renunciation of the material world, and particularly of meat, wine and sexual intercourse, was a way of life to which only a minority could commit themselves, the Cathar faith was evidently one which exercised a great fascination on the men and women of the time.

It took more than a century of war and persecution after Pope Innocent III declared a crusade against the Cathars to put the heresy down. Nor did the Cathars disappear without trace. Apart from the fact that the Albigensian Crusade altered the course of French history, and that the Inquisition left a permanent mark in the consciousness of southern Europe, later religious movements have been influenced by Catharism, and as late as the Second World War there was a neo-Catharist sect in Toulouse. (See also BLACK MASS; SABBATH.)

DAVID PHILLIPS

The Albigensian Crusade

By the 12th century the troubadour culture of poetry and song, come from no one knows where, flourished among the aristocracy of southern France. By its side flourished the austere Cathar faith often practised by the aristocrats themselves.

In 1174 the Cistercian St Bernard preached against the Cathars in Toulouse, and their *bons-hommes* were forced to leave the city; but not for long. In 1204 Pope Innocent III told the King of France that Count Raymond VI of Toulouse must be deposed and a good Catholic installed in his stead, but Philip Augustus of France took no action. The next year a monk, Dominic Guzman of Caluérega, assailed the heretics in a new missionary style. Like the Cathar

Perfecti, he went barefoot and simply dressed to preach to the masses.

The Pope appointed officials called Legates to Languedoc, that part of southern France lying to the west of the Rhône and to the east of the Bordeaux country. In 1207 they asked Count Raymond to join a league of southern barons, pledged to hunt down the heretics. When he refused, he was excommunicated and it was announced that whoever killed the Count would earn a blessing.

On 15 January 1208, one of Raymond's squires assassinated the Papal Legate Peter of Castelnau at St Gilles on the banks of the Rhone. For two days the Pope could not speak for rage. On 10 March 1208 he called for a crusade against the heretics who were 'worse than the very Saracen'.

The king of France refused to engage himself. But many knights of northern France were attracted by this novel crusade, the first inside Europe. In the statutory 40 days of crusading they could gain salvation without crossing the seas; their sins would be remitted and the goods of the heretics would be at their disposal.

So in the spring of 1209 some 20,000 knights with a huge band of foot soldiers came down the Rhone and assembled at Lyons, whence the crusade set forth on 24 June, St John's Day. Raymond VI, an adroit opportunist, did penance at St Gilles barefoot and in his shirt, then hastened to join the crusade at Valence. He hoped not only to save his own lands but also to rid himself of Roger Trencavel, a powerful rival. Trencavel met the crusade at Montpellier and offered to make submission. This refused, he left for Carcassonne through Béziers, taking with him to apparent safety Béziers's best-known heretics and Jews.

The crusaders, moving south, invested Béziers on 21 July and prepared for a long siege. But after an ill-advised sally by the defenders the city fell into their hands next day. Over 20,000 people were massacred, including all who had taken refuge in the Church of the Madeleine. It is said that when the Papal Legate, Arnald-Amalric of Cîteaux, was asked how heretics should be distinguished from true believers, he replied, 'Kill them all. God will look after his own.'

Terrorized, cities and towns surrendered to the advancing crusaders. Only Carcassonne, where they arrived on 1 August, prepared to hold out. Under safe-conduct Trencavel went to the crusader camp to negotiate, and against all honourable usage was taken prisoner; he died in captivity soon after. Bereft of its lord, Carcassonne surrendered after only 15 days' siege to the most determined and brutal of the invaders, Simon de Montfort (father of the Simon de Montfort famous in English history).

Prudently refused by greater northern lords, the Trencavel lands were assigned to Montfort. By September the 40 official days of crusading were over and most of the knights went home. But Montfort stayed in the Languedoc and began a ruthless pursuit of the bons-hommes, who at first

retreated to hill fortresses in the Minervois and Corbières regions. They held out for months during the burning summer of 1210, but were eventually forced to surrender for lack of food and water. When they did, those who refused to recant perished in huge bonfires.

Massacre at Montségur

Montfort's ambitions grew. He sought to be Count of Toulouse. The crusade had become a defensive war of south against north, with King Pedro II of Aragon and the Count of Foix rallying to Raymond of Toulouse. But in 1213 Pedro was killed at the battle of Muret, a decisive victory for

The Cathar fortress of Carcassonne fell to Simon de Montfort after only 15 days' siege



Ancient Art & Architecture Collection

Montfort. Raymond was excommunicated again. The Council of Montpellier awarded Toulouse to Montfort, and in May 1215 the city fell into his hands. Its walls were razed and its treasures plundered. Montfort's greed and brutality appalled even the Pope.

In April 1216 Raymond VI and his son returned to the Languedoc from exile and were welcomed as liberators. Raymond retook Toulouse and massacred the French garrison. Montfort besieged the city for nine months, then was killed by a stone fired – it is said by women – from inside the walls.

But the triumph was short-lived. In 1222 Raymond VI died. In 1226 the Council of Bourges excommunicated his successor Raymond VII, who had won back Simon de Montfort's conquests from Montfort's son Amaury. Amaury ceded his rights to the king of France and a new crusading army under Louis VIII came down the Rhone and retook all Languedoc except Toulouse. The country was systematically ravaged. Raymond VII yielded in 1229, and promised to rid the country of heretics and to marry his young daughter to the king of France's brother. When she died without children, in 1271, the Languedoc, a ruined country with its civilization destroyed, was formally attached to the Crown of France.

Meanwhile, the extirpation of the Cathars had continued. The Order of Preaching Friars founded by Dominic Guzman had been entrusted with the work of the Inquisition in Languedoc, and terrorized the population. The last open resis-

tance of the Cathars was at Montségur, their holy fortress on a hill where, between 1243 and 1244, they held out for ten months. When at last they surrendered, enormous pyres surrounded by palisades consumed the 200 Perfecti who refused to renounce their faith. Legend has it that their treasure of gold and holy books still lies hidden at Montségur.

MARGHANITA LASKI

In recent years, a number of influences have resulted in a revived interest in Cathars and Catharism. On the academic front, the resurgence of regionalism has led to a growing interest in the Occitan language, the *langue d'oc*, and the many publications of René Nelli, the *doyen* of regional historians, have stimulated a desire to discover more of the past history of the area.

Another contributor to this field of studies has been the Marxist historian E. Le Roy Ladurie, whose investigation of an inquisition into the surviving Catharist beliefs of the villagers of Montailou (not far from Montségur), a full century after the end of the Albigensian Crusade, became a best-seller in France, and was subsequently successful in a number of translations.

On the popular front, an interest in the fate of the Cathars has been fuelled by persistent rumours of their alleged treasure. No abandoned site – including the ruins of Montségur itself – is safe from the depredations and excavations of the treasure-hunters; but most remarkable has been the cult that has developed around the little village of Rennes-le-château.

From local tales of the unexplained wealth of a former curé (objective investigation of his accounts reveals that he trafficked in Masses on a large scale) the story grew into the international best-selling book *The Holy Blood & the Holy Grail*, and has continued to proliferate since. The authors of *The Holy Blood*, assiduously misled by an inveterate hoaxer, developed a specious theory embracing the survival of Christ after the crucifixion; his marriage to Mary Magdalene and establishment of a blood line that became the succession of Merovingian kings in southern France; the secret survival of the Knights Templar; and a 'treasure' variously regarded as that of the Temple in Jerusalem, a Cathar hoard, or some secret of a purely spiritual nature.

The widespread interest – greater abroad than in France – engendered by this book and its successors has led to the establishment of centres around Rennes-le-château where visitors are encouraged to study a range of mystic philosophies (see ESOTERIC CHRISTIANITY), including what is claimed to be a resurgent form of Catharism.

FURTHER READING: J. Sumption, *Albigensian Crusade* (Merrimack, 1978); A. Guirham, *A Foot in Both Worlds* (Spearman 1973); F. Heer, *The Medieval World: Europe 1100-1350* (NAL, 1964); S. Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1947); Z. Oldenbourg, *Massacre at Montségur* (Funk and Wagnall, 1968); E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Montailou* (Scolar Press, 1978).

ST CATHERINE

CATHERINE OF SIENA, born on 25 March 1347, was the 23rd child of a dyer named Jacomo Benincasa. A mystic who showed all the signs of religious fanaticism, she was driven by her convictions to attempt to change the pattern of European history.

In the 14th century, religion and politics were inextricably entangled, and the Pope was nominal ruler of the Western world. Although rising nationalism had not yet broken the unity of Christendom, there was almost always fighting somewhere between states. At the time of Catherine's birth, the Pope ruled from Avignon in France; Rome and the Papal States were in ruins. In this situation, a religious fanatic was able to exert a powerful influence on events.

Catherine's biographer, Raimondo of Capua, tells us that at the age of five she had her first vision, in which she saw Christ enthroned above St Dominic's Church in Siena, attended by Sts Peter, Paul and John the Evangelist. When she was seven or so, she decided to become a hermit, but heavenly voices counselled against this.

At 16, after another vision, she became a tertiary among the Daughters of Penance of St Dominic's order of preachers. But the friar into whose hands she was put did not demand enough from her. She voluntarily shut herself up in her father's house, and over the next three years accused herself of entertaining the foulest temptations.

On Shrove Tuesday 1366, when she was almost 19, the vigils and pains of her adolescence were rewarded by a vision in which she was betrothed to the only husband she could accept, Christ himself.

She experienced the vision in the room she used as her cell. A ring, set with a diamond symbolizing faith, and surrounded by four pearls signifying purity of intention, thought, word and deed, was placed on her finger by Christ himself. The witnesses were his Mother, saints John, Paul and Dominic, and King David the Psalmist.

After this experience Catherine was driven by inner promptings, which she described in concrete terms of voices and visions, to leave her room. She became well known in Siena, partly for her charity towards the sick and poor, but more for the trances into which she repeatedly fell, especially after receiving Holy Communion.

At such times she was totally insensitive and her limbs became stiff and cold. Asked what happened at such moments, she could say only that she was so full of Christ that her senses stopped working. Whether explained in her own terms or in those of the morbid psychology of hysteria, these trances remain a remarkable example of religious ecstasy.

By May 1374, Catherine had become so

Tomb of St Catherine of Siena in Rome: she died at 34, believing herself to be tormented by demons. Although she was buried at Rome, her head was cut off and taken to Siena, where it remains to this day

notorious that she was summoned to appear before the General Chapter of her Order at Florence to answer charges, record of which has unfortunately not survived. The hearing brought her wider notoriety – and a new confessor, Father Raimondo of Capua, later the Dominican Prior-General and her first biographer.

Preaching the Crusade

In the summer of 1374 there was an outbreak of plague in Tuscany. Catherine had been calling for a crusade to free the Holy Places in Palestine from the Mohammedans, but forgot the need for a holy war while the plague lasted. The winter of 1375, however, found her in Pisa, moving crowds to religious fervour by her very presence, and preaching the crusade at every opportunity. Her enthusiasm was matched by that of the new pope, Gregory XI. Catherine wrote not only to him, but also to many of the rulers of Europe, stressing the need for war. But when it came, it was to Tuscany.

Before the outbreak of war, Catherine, still at Pisa, underwent yet another major mystical experience, when, on 1 April 1375, she received the stigmata, the wounds inflicted on Christ on the cross. No one saw the five wounds until after her death, and she explained their invisibility by saying that she had especially requested it: 'I saw the Lord on the Cross...I saw five rays the colour of blood directed at my hands, my feet and my heart. Understanding this mystery, I suddenly cried out, 'O Lord my God, I beg thee do not let these wounds show on





Left When she was almost 19 St Catherine experienced a vision in which she was betrothed to Christ, depicted here as an infant **Above** St Catherine, showing on her hands the stigmata, invisible until after her death

she spent a week in Siena dictating her most famous spiritual work, now known as *The Dialogues of St Catherine*.

The Terror of the Demons

On 30 January 1380, Catherine suffered a stroke, remaining unconscious for some hours. In a letter written a fortnight later she attributed her attack to 'the terror of the demons...roused to rage' against her reforming work. Her description of her life at this time is worth quoting. 'At the hour of tierce I rise from Mass, and you would see a dead woman going to St Peter's...I remain there praying until nearly the vesper-hour...My body remains without food or even a drop of water, with physical torments of a sweetness I have never before endured.' Nor could she long endure them now. She complained that the whole weight of the Barque of Peter lay on her shoulders. The burden broke her. She was struck by paralysis and before the end of March she already looked like a mummified corpse. But she did not die until Sunday, 29 April.

Catherine was buried in the Minerva church at Rome, but her head was removed and carried to Siena, where it may still be seen, one of the most repulsive, although among the most venerated, of Christian relics. She was canonized in 1461.

J. HOLLAND SMITH

the outside of my body.' Believing that she was mystically married to her Saviour, had mystically died with him, and was continually sharing his sufferings, Catherine plunged into the troubled events of her last five years of life.

In Tuscany, the plague of 1374 had left near-hysteria and famine in its wake. The Council of Eight in Florence, angry at the Papal States' refusal to supply corn at realistic prices, made an alliance with Milan, permitted the sacking of the churches and monasteries of Florence, added the word *Libertas* in letters of silver to the blood-red banner of the city, and declared war on the papacy. Catherine, who habitually called the Pope 'Christ-on-earth', immediately embraced the cause of Gregory XI.

Soon she was in Florence using her eloquence and her influential friends to persuade the Eight to send her to Avignon as a member of the city's peace delegation. At Avignon in 1376, she was repudiated by the Florentine delegation, but stayed on at the papal court, trying to persuade Gregory that true peace could come only if he would return to Italy and reform the Church. It took a massacre of mercenaries at Cesena, as well as the triumphal return of the Pope to Rome, to smash the Tuscan League and bring the Florentines to a genuine peace conference. But before terms were made, Gregory had died, in March 1378.

The new Pope, Urban VI, was bombarded with advice from Siena. He commanded Catherine to come to Rome. Before obeying,

FURTHER READING: Alice Curtayne, *Saint Catherine of Siena* (Tan Books, 1980); E. Gardner, *Saint Catherine of Siena* (Gordon Press, 1976); S. Noffke ed, *Catherine of Siena* (Pauline Press, 1980); A. Thorold, *The Dialogue of the Seraphic Virgin, Catherine of Siena* (Tan Books, 1976).

CAULDRON

THAT THE CAULDRON was an object of sacred and ritual significance in early Celtic societies has been established by finds of ritual cauldrons dating back to the Celtic Iron Age and earlier; and by medieval Irish and Welsh tales of sacred cauldrons. The pagan Celts, believing that hospitality had an almost religious significance, seem to have looked on the cauldron as being symbolic of this quality, for in this vessel food for the welcoming feast was cooked. It was therefore an important utensil in the king's household, and cauldrons were no doubt prized possessions wherever they could be afforded, from simple pottery vessels to the great elaborate metal cauldrons described in legends.

As a symbol of plenty, the cauldron was connected with fertility. Food, and as a result life, came from the cauldron. Certain mythological cauldrons were allegedly capable of reviving the dead. Others were believed to contain a liquid that could confer poetic inspiration on those who drank it, a fitting belief for people as dedicated to poetry as the Celts. Certain sacred cauldrons were considered to be inexhaustible – no matter how much was taken from them, they never became empty. So it is not surprising to find that the cauldron was an important attribute of the typical Celtic all-purpose tribal god, father of his people, such as the Dagda of Ireland.

Two of the most important cauldrons still in existence were found in Jutland, Denmark. The better-known one was discovered in a bog at Gundestrup. It is a large silver bowl onto which eight outer plates and five inner ones were originally fixed. These, and another on the inner bottom of the bowl, are all beautifully decorated, the inner ones with representations of what must be cult scenes, the outer ones with busts of Celtic gods and goddesses.

The other cauldron was found at Bra, where it had been broken into pieces before being placed in a small pit. Like the Gundestrup cauldron, the Bra vessel had presumably been deposited as an offering to some specific deity or supernatural force. It was originally a large bronze cauldron, decorated about the rim with ox heads and owl masks, two creatures sacred to the Celts.

Filled with Blood

Another most impressive piece of evidence for the use of the cauldron in a religious context comes from Vix in France, where a Greek *krater* of bronze dating to about 500 BC was found in the richly appointed grave of a Celtic princess. A griffon-cauldron with a tripod has also been found, associated with a burial at Ste Colombe nearby. These vessels were imported from the Mediterranean region, and were no doubt buried in the belief that they would be useful in the great otherworld feast beyond the grave. One of the most enduring and persistent Celtic concepts of the otherworld is that hospitality and feasting were of prime importance, and gave never-ending pleasure and satisfaction (see CELTS).

The Cimbri, a Celto-Germanic tribe, slaughtered human victims over a cauldron which became filled with their blood. Sacrifices were made to the great god Teutates, a war god of the Gauls, by suffocating human victims in a cauldron, and one of the most important features of the Gundestrup cauldron is a scene which is generally thought to depict some such ritual actually in progress. A male figure, presumably the deity himself, holds a man by the feet over the mouth of a large vessel. This scene could perhaps be interpreted equally well as the act of throwing a dead warrior into the sacred cauldron of regeneration, with the god giving life back, not taking it away.

Beer for Immortality

Celtic literature provides some new information. Several of the Irish and Welsh deities were believed to possess huge magic cauldrons, and the stealing of the otherworld cauldron by the semi-divine hero is a dominant theme in the early tales. The five *bruidne* (feasting halls) of ancient Irish tradition each had a magical cauldron which cooked the correct amount of food for all comers, no matter how great the company. Other Celtic deities also had wonderful

The Gundestrup cauldron: the scene on the inner panel shows a male figure holding a man over a large vessel, and is generally thought to depict the ritual sacrifice of a human victim to the war god. The figures on the outer panels represent Celtic deities

cauldrons, such as the one used by Goibniu, the smith god, to brew his beer for his otherworld feast. All who partook of Goibniu's feast became immortal.

The Irish god Mider, King of the Gaelic underworld, likewise owned a cauldron of this kind. Cu Chulainn, one of the greatest heroes of Celtic myths, and the god Cu Roi stole it from Mider's dwelling and the vessel became Cu Roi's after a struggle. Welsh tradition has it that Pwyll, Lord of Annwn, the otherworld, had a magic cauldron in his possession, which King Arthur and his men made an expedition to steal (see ARTHUR).

The Welsh Bran the Blessed (see BRAN) also owned a wonderful cauldron of regeneration which had been given to him by a giant and his wife after their escape from the King of Ireland, who had attempted to destroy them. This couple are clearly deities, often described as huge and ugly people, doing mischief to mankind. The cauldron is evidently a sacred otherworld vessel.

The literary tradition, then, confirms the archeological evidence concerning the role of the cauldron in early Celtic mythology and ritual. The giving of the cauldron to a mortal, or its theft by the hero, is the focal point of several of the early legends. The great decorated cauldrons of Iron Age Europe, and the ritual attending their final deposition on bogs or in pools, were no doubt associated with similar legends and beliefs, and with grim sacrifices that are only hinted at in legends. (See also GRAIL.)



National Museum, Denmark



CAVE ART

The Magic World of Prehistoric Man

It was long believed that many prehistoric images in caves were connected with ritual magic to ensure fertility and success in hunting, but more recent theories have suggested that a richer and more complex system, perhaps of sexual symbolism, was involved.

PAINTINGS AND ENGRAVINGS on rock surfaces can be found in almost every country in the world, and this rock art spans a period from at least 40,000 years ago until the present day. Recently new scientific techniques have made it possible to learn a great deal about the age and production of this art by analysing the composition of paint, and, for the first time, directly dating organic material in the paint or trapped in rock-varnish overlying engravings in the open-air.

In cases where no such direct dating is possible, some idea of the art's age can be obtained by the more traditional methods of linking it with associated archaeological remains or seeking stylistic analogies between the art and motifs on objects of bone, antler, pottery or metal. In some cases, the depiction of now-extinct animals gives an indication of considerable age; in others, items of equipment shown in the art can be equated with actual (and datable) objects found in excavations.

All archeological investigation suffers from the same disadvantage, that it can be assumed that the material recovered in excavations is only partial and that the sample known is biased. For financial reasons, it is rare for any site to be fully exca-

Among the most remarkable Stone Age paintings are those in the cave at Lascaux in France, like this one of a cow and a horse. Animals may have been represented to give men magical control over them

vated, and the sites actually investigated represent only a minute fraction of those known to exist. For the majority of prehistoric periods, therefore, it is impossible to know very much about the total artistic output of a particular culture. However, it is lucky that at many different periods in the past, and in many different areas of the world, artists chose large, static and imperishable rock surface as their canvases.

One of the regions where rock art has received the most extensive study is Europe.



Fratelli Fabbri



Fratelli Fabbri



Fratelli Fabbri

Above left The outline of a human hand in a cave at Pech-Merle in France: red ochre, powdered and mixed with water or saliva, was sprayed over a hand placed against the wall, either through a tube or directly from the mouth. It has been suggested that these hands, which can also be seen (**above right**) in this painting of horses in the Pech-Merle complex of caves, may have been protection against the Evil Eye **Above** These paintings of fish and human figures in the Levanzo cave in the Egadi islands near Sicily postdate the cave's paleolithic animal engravings

Some of the rock art of Europe can be definitely dated to the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age period. Some can be dated, on the basis of parallels with weapons and tools found in excavations, to specific periods between 2,000 and 450 BC; others can be assigned to particular cultures because of the inscriptions found on them. Many works, however, such as the grouped lines and abstract designs in Fontainebleau forest near Paris, are still undatable.

Those examples of European cave and rock art that can be assigned some kind of date are principally found in areas which suggest that they were executed by people who did not practise agriculture but lived by hunting, fishing and stock-breeding in forested zones, in mountainous regions and

in narrow valleys. Alternatively, it can be argued that the artists were those people who were put in charge of the flocks and herds, and who had to search for fodder and water in the higher areas for part of the year; or that the artists were those who were posted to the higher areas for purposes of defence.

These rock carvings and paintings, except those of Paleolithic date, share certain features in common. Most of them were executed on rock surfaces which were (and still are) open to the air and which are visible in daylight. There are very few examples indeed of European art inside caves which can be dated to the post-Paleolithic periods; though notable exceptions include some of the Sicilian caves which contain paintings

and engravings of probable Mesolithic and Neolithic date, certain caves in the Balkans which were possibly cult centres in later prehistoric times, and certain Cretan caves which may have been sanctuaries in historic times. The majority of these exposed rock surfaces contain 'scenes' showing domestic activities or hunting or war. Most of them include recognizable artefacts such as tools, weapons or houses. Most of them include depictions of humans which are basically 'stick figures'. These figures, engaged in various recognizable domestic and aggressive activities, differ markedly in content and character from another group of prehistoric works of art which, although also executed on rocks, include virtually no obvious cases of identifiable scenes and which, in many

In some caves, paintings and engravings can only be reached after several hours of scrambling, climbing and crawling

cases, are situated within the dark galleries of caves. These are representations which can be dated to the Upper Paleolithic period (c 30,000-10,000 BC).

The Old Stone Age Caves

The Paleolithic cave art so far discovered is centred on south-western France and northern Spain with important, more or less isolated and restricted, examples in southern Spain, Portugal, Sicily and eastern France. In other parts of Europe where caves also exist, deliberate searches for Paleolithic cave art have failed to find any examples. Only in Romania and the Urals has a possibly related cave and rock art been discovered.

The Upper Paleolithic period coincided with the last major advance of ice sheets over Europe, and with the long period of their slow and irregular retreat which was punctuated by several fresh advances. As a result, although the climate was generally cold, it was not uniformly so during the whole of the period. The changes in climate affected the relative abundance of wild animals and hence the livelihood of the Upper Paleolithic peoples. They lived by hunting, fishing, fowling and gathering; they practised no agriculture or stock-breeding. They camped beneath rock shelters and in the entrances of caves, but they sometimes erected tents or built huts from wood or mammoth bones. It was very rare for them actually to live in the depths of caves, much beyond the reach of daylight.

Upper Paleolithic tools and weapons were made of flint or similar rock, and of bone antler and ivory; perishable materials such as wood and vegetable fibres were almost certainly also used. Spears tipped with various types of stone, bone or antler points were used for hunting, and harpoons with detachable heads for fishing. In cold phases the quarry consisted mostly of the mammals of the tundra and steppe: horse, bison, reindeer, mammoth, woolly rhinoceros and ibex. In the very south of Europe, and elsewhere during milder phases, woodland animals were hunted: notably wild oxen, red deer and boar. Various wild fowl and also fish are found amongst food debris towards the end of the Ice Age.

By and large these are the animals which are found depicted on the walls of caves (and some rock shelters) as well as some

carnivores such as cave lion, wolf and bear. Besides animals, Paleolithic cave art features a varied series of signs, symbols or designs of no obvious significance, as well as some human figures and a few imaginary creatures. Vegetation and landscape are absent. Unlike the rock art of later ages, Paleolithic cave art does not include obvious representational scenes. There are (with one exception) no identifiable activities such as war, hunting or dancing, and there are no 'stick figures'. The images most commonly occur in an apparently haphazard way on the rock surfaces, with little obvious relation to each other, either in their positioning, relative size or orientation. The animal species shown together would not normally in nature have been seen together. In many cases a figure may be entirely or partially covered by another.

The Artists' Technique

Paleolithic cave art includes paintings, engravings, low-relief sculptures and clay modellings, as well as various combinations of these techniques. The paints used were made of natural earth pigments which occur in the areas of the caves: red and yellow ochres and black manganese oxide – although charcoal was also used for black. Greens, blues and white are not found in Paleolithic art. 'Crayons' of ochre have been found in the habitation debris of several sites; caches of ochre are not uncommon in the decorated caves. Grinding stones were used for powdering the ochre.

For paintings such as the 'negative' hand stencils of Gargas in the Pyrenees, it seems that the paint was sprayed in liquid form, through a blowpipe or directly from the mouth, at a hand placed on the rock; this produced a clear outline of the hand with a gradual fading of the colour around. There is clear evidence of the use of liquid paint, for in a few instances there are obvious drip lines running from the paintings. It is also likely that paint was sometimes applied as a paste mixed with fat or clay.

Engravings were produced by several different techniques. Many fine engravings may have been made with a specialized tool known as a burin, with a narrow chisel-shaped edge, although any sharp flint tool would do. By making a very shallow incision in the rock, the thin weathered outer zone was removed, and the unweathered rock,

generally of a paler colour, was revealed underneath. Some engravings, pecked out with flint picks, are deeply outlined; these are generally of early date.

These simple engravings were probably the technical predecessors of the finely modelled low-relief sculptures, which were executed in the same way with flint picks, sometimes being outlined by a deeply hollow-cut groove. The sculptured surfaces were subsequently smoothed over, for tool marks are not usually discernible. Traces of red ochre can still be seen on some examples but these low-relief sculptures are nearly all in daylight, in rock shelters or very close to the entrances of caves, their surfaces being generally greatly weathered. Deeper inside caves there are many examples of combined engraving and painting.

Another engraving technique made use of weathered cave wall surfaces or the thin clay films on some walls: it was possible to make tracings with the fingers or soft sticks on such soft surfaces. Clay floors of caves were also decorated, but these have only survived in exceptional conditions, either under overhangs or in parts of the caves which were difficult of access. Most are engravings, but some superb clay modellings are also known.

Some of the decorated caves are large and deep, with the decorations extending for a considerable distance underground: paintings and engravings can only be reached after several hours of scrambling, climbing and crawling. In most caves, however, decorations usually start either within the entrance region of the cave or very near to it, and were therefore associated with the living areas in the cave mouths. Inhabited rock shelters were also sometimes embellished with the images on surrounding walls and overhanging rock, or on blocks of stone arranged against the wall.

Dating and Meaning

Two major points of interest for Paleolithic art, as for all rock art, are dating and significance. Thanks to new scientific advances, requiring only minute amounts of pigment for analysis or radiocarbon dating, it has become possible to obtain direct dates for several decorated caves. In the past, chronological schemes were proposed, based on the supposed relative ages of different styles present during 20,000 years of



Michael Holford

Paleolithic artistic activity in Europe. Such schemes depended on an assumed single or double cycle of development, from the simple to the sophisticated, and on the argument that an image superimposed on another must necessarily have been executed later. The new dates being obtained are revealing that these schemes were often wrong and far too simplistic.

Each cave is proving to be far more complex in the production of its art, with a series of different episodes of artistic activity being detected through the use of different pigment recipes or through dates from different periods. It is becoming clear that cave art was not a simple accumulation of individual images, as early scholars thought, nor a single homogeneous composition as later researchers believed; instead, cave decoration appears to be an episodic accumulation of compositions, often separated by thousands of years.

Hunting, Fertility and Magic

Following the discovery of paleolithic cave art in the late 19th century, it was generally accepted that it had a magical or ritual significance. Much Paleolithic art is found deep in the caves beyond the reach of daylight, which suggested that this period of art reflected more than mere enjoyment of art for its own sake. It seemed obvious that man's greatest preoccupation in Paleolithic times must have been the search for food. Ritual and magic would be used to ensure success in the hunt, and Paleolithic art was interpreted as an example of imitative

magic. The hunters believed that they could gain magical power over their quarry, either by representing it on a cave wall or floor, or by enacting a ritual hunt in front of a representation of the quarry.

Many of the animals represented in cave art were those whose remains were found among the food debris of Paleolithic man. The majority of the other animals depicted, the carnivores and other dangerous beasts, would have constituted a threat to Paleolithic man's existence and would also have been hunted by him.

Many of the signs and symbols of cave art, some of which are distributed around and on the animals, but many of which occur singly or grouped together on panels, were taken to be representations of darts, the throwing of stones, clubs or traps; they were thus included in the general hunting interpretation. Marks on some of the animals were taken to signify wounds.

As more and more discoveries of decorated caves became known, this interpretation was modified to some extent. A fertility element was recognized, as well as the hunting element. It was suggested that depictions of humans, and of certain food animals which were shown without wounds, were intended to increase the numbers of the available food quarry and to increase the human population itself.

This interpretation has long been discarded as too simplistic: there are no hunting or sexual scenes in paleolithic art, and there is a striking absence of correlation between the relative frequencies of the

On the ceiling of a cave at Altamira in Spain a herd of bison were painted in red, yellow and black pigment. They were observed, for the first time in 15,000 years, in 1879; the little daughter of the cave's excavator was playing idly when she suddenly saw them

animals represented in the art – a frequency which varies considerably from region to region, from cave to cave, and even within any one cave – and the relative frequencies of the same animals in actual Paleolithic food debris.

In addition, many of the so-called weapons cannot really be equated with actual artefact types, and it is difficult to see why, on numerous occasions, such weapons should have been shown in isolation or even, in some cases, as missing the quarry. It is an important fact of Paleolithic art statistics that the majority of representations are shown with no wounds and with no 'weapons' about to strike them.

It is also worth noting that modern hunting and gathering communities are in no way preoccupied with the quest for food, as is assumed for the prehistoric hunters. Many such communities have the time, skill and sophistication for considerable artistic work which is in no way associated with the search for food. There is nothing to suggest that Upper Paleolithic hunting was more difficult than that of many hunting peoples today, and it is reasonable to examine the possibility that Paleolithic art was the result of a more sophisticated activity than simple imitative magic.



The Value of Magic

The representations may have played a part in the rites by which young men were initiated as fully adult members of society. To judge by analogy with what is known, for example, of Australian aboriginal art, it seems highly unlikely that rock paintings or engravings were sufficient in themselves. A much more likely probability is that they formed part of a complex of activities which certainly included dancing and may also have included miming.

...In primitive society no clear distinction is drawn between economic, religious or magical activities, or, to put it in more abstract terms, between ritual and what we would regard as

practical activities. This same consideration applies with more or less force to cave art as a whole, and, if the psychological effect of the ritual (including the production of cave art) is taken into account, who is to say that the ice age hunters were wrong? When as much depended on luck as it did in hunting, an activity in which man was matched with only primitive weapons directly against the beasts, magical rites that had the effect of increasing confidence and heightening solidarity were evidently of the utmost practical value. The value of a rite, or rather its efficacy, depends after all on the response it evokes.

Grahame Clark and Stuart Piggot
Prehistoric Societies

ings and recordings of the figures are incomplete or inaccurate and need to be verified or replaced. Pigment analyses and new dates will eventually provide a far clearer picture of how caves were decorated, and of what was drawn in different artistic episodes. This may help explain why particular animals were depicted in particular locations.

More attention will also be paid to detailed investigation of features such as size, visibility, accessibility and orientation: some of the art is 'public', highly visible and easily accessible, while other images are 'private', hidden away in nooks and crannies. Where private art is concerned, it seems likely that the difficulties in reaching such locations and in producing the images played a major role in the experience, and



Fratelli Fabbri



Fratelli Fabbri

Left A painting in a shaft in Lascaux cave, showing a wounded bison, a dead or wounded man, and a bird perched on a stake. It may be a memorial to a dead hunter, or it may depict a priest in trance before a bison which is to be sacrificed, the bird being the priest's soul or spirit watching over him **Below left** Black bull, from Lascaux **Above** Acrobats apparently performing a ritual dance are the central figures in a group of engravings from Addaura, Sicily **Above right** One among scores of outline animals from Niaux

Sexual Symbolism

In the 1960s some French researchers, notably Professor André Leroi-Gourhan, rejected the traditional view of cave art as an accumulation of individual images placed at random on the walls, and instead saw each cave as a deliberate and carefully laid-out composition, a variation on a standard 'blueprint'. It was ascertained that horses and bison are by far the most commonly depicted animals on cave walls, and that they often dominate the principal or central panels, while other species such as deer, ibex or mammoths occupy more peripheral roles and positions.

It became apparent that there were definite rules in cave layout – some animals were depicted together often, others never. Leroi-Gourhan saw the basic duality of horses and bison as a sexual symbolism, with the horse representing the male and the bison the female. He also divided the apparently non-figurative 'signs' – previously thought to represent weapons, traps

and wounds – into two groups, the phallic and the vulvar, which were placed in association with, or close to, the animal figures. The distribution of all these images within each cave suggested an organized sanctuary or holy place. In short, 'Paleolithic representations are concerned with an extremely rich and complex system, much richer and much more complex than...previously suspected.'

Studies of cave and rock art are in many ways still in their infancy. In the whole of Europe we still know of no more than about 275 sites with Paleolithic rock art, which is very few when seen against the art's 20,000 year timespan. New discoveries are still being made, about one per year.

Most early investigations centred on establishing principles of dating, based on the rather naive assumption that artistic work will inevitably proceed from the simple to the more complex, and the belief that a superpositioning signifies no more than a difference in time between two representations. Now that the new dating techniques are fast making such studies redundant, researchers are concentrating more on how the art was produced, its locations and its possible significance. For decades, work was hampered by the acceptance of general, all-embracing explanations of the art's purpose and meaning, but current research emphasises the heterogeneous and multipurpose nature of artforms that span so many millennia.

Much effort is now being devoted to improving the database, since most old trac-

ing the act of making the images was more important than the images themselves, which in many cases were never revisited after their manufacture.

It is highly unlikely that there is one single common denominator, beyond the constant depiction of a restricted range of adult animals in profile, behind all Paleolithic cave art. It varies from simple finger-markings and engravings to figures on stone blocks, from sculptures in clay and stone, to polychrome paintings, and from simple dots and lines to highly complex 'signs', and many of these features are highly localised in space and time.

The huge timespan, the range of locations and artistic techniques, and the simultaneous use of different conventions such as realism, schematisation, stylisation and abstraction make it futile to try and encompass everything within one theory.

PETER J. UCKO*

FURTHER READING: For a comprehensive review of the different interpretations, see P. J. Ucko and A. Rosenfeld, *Paleolithic Cave Art* (McGraw-Hill, 1967); and for A. Leroi-Gourhan's theories, see his *Treasures of Prehistoric Art* (Abrams, 1967) which is excellently illustrated, as is P. Graziosi, *Paleolithic Art* (McGraw-Hill, 1960). For consideration of more recent developments, see also M. Ruspoli, *The Cave of Lascaux: the Final Photographic Record* (Abrams, 1987); A. Sieveking, *The Cave Artists* (Thames and Hudson, 1979); P.G. Bahn and J. Vertut, *Images of the Ice Age* (Facts on File, 1988).

CAVES

FROM THE DAWN of human culture caves have been used as dwellings, sanctuaries and tombs, and in fact the use of caves can be traced back long before the appearance of *homo sapiens* in the archeological record. About 300,000 BC the so-called Peking Man, a remote predecessor of modern man, lived in the Choukoutien caves near Peking. Skeletal remains found in these caves seem to indicate the practice of ritual cannibalism. Another notable instance of the pre-human use of caves was discovered in the Guattari cave on Monte Circeo, Italy, dating from the Mousterian period (c 100,000 BC). There a 'human' skull had been deposited, surrounded by a ring of stones, apparently evidence of some magical rite.

Some of the most impressive evidence of the ritual use of caves comes from the Upper Paleolithic period (c 30,000–10,000 BC), when true man had displaced his sub-human ancestors. In south-western France and the Pyrenean area of Spain figures of animals, including bison, reindeer, horses, mammoths and the woolly rhinoceros, were depicted on the walls and roofs of caves. Many of these animals are represented as pregnant or wounded with darts. This cave art is generally regarded by modern scholars as magical in intent, being designed to promote the fertility of the beasts which men hunted for food, or to ensure success in hunting them (see CAVE ART). There is also evidence that ritual practices were performed in the caves and some of them appear to have been holy places. The most notable example is the cave of the Trois Frères at Ariège in France, where a strange half-human, half-animal figure dominates an inner cavern.

There are many examples of the ritual use of caves in later times. It is difficult to determine why they were originally chosen for sanctuaries but it seems that the mysterious nature of most caves may have been the decisive factor. Often, they were probably regarded as entrances to the underworld.

The following examples give some idea of the various types of cave sanctuaries and their wide geographical distribution. The famous temple at Abu-Simbel in Egypt, built by order of Rameses II in the 13th century BC, and dedicated to the gods Re-Harmakhis (the Rising Sun), Amun, and the Pharaoh himself, is an artificial cave. It is designed so that the rising sun shines through the entrance, to illumine the divine figures in the inner sanctuary.

Ancient Crete had many cave sanctuaries, connected with the cult of the Mother Goddess. Possibly, the cave suggested the womb of the Earth Mother. Several of these caves were associated with the birth of Zeus. The cave of the Sibyl at Cumae, described by Virgil, was famous for its oracle. In India there are magnificent cave temples at

Karli, Ajanta and Ellora, held sacred by both Buddhists and Hindus. At Tun-Huang in China are the caves of the Thousand Buddhas, so-called from the multitudes of images of Buddha which they contain.

Caves were often associated with the birth of a god or a divine hero, as in the case of Zeus in Crete. In Rome the Lupercal cave sheltered the infant Romulus and Remus. Mithra was born from a rock and worshipped in caves. The birthplace of Christ at Bethlehem is a cave. Caves, natural or artificial, have also provided tombs for the dead, often acquiring special sanctity from those buried in them. The most notable example is the cave tomb of Christ in Jerusalem, over which the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built.

Company in Death

The men of the last ice age buried their dead evidently believing in a physical afterlife . . . the dead were often buried in the dwelling caves where they had lived, so that they might remain in familiar surroundings. Grave pits were carefully dug in cave floors, and the corpse deposited either in a 'sleeping position' – on its side, on its back – or crouching. A protective layer of stones was then placed around and over the grave . . . In Predmost, Moravia, Czechoslovakia, a mass grave was found to contain at least 14 skeletons, protected by a layer of stones. Apparently the dead were to keep one another company.

Johannes Maringer *The Gods of Prehistoric Man*



Early Christian monks sought solitude for contemplation in the desert and in caves: the Goreme cave monastery in Cappadocia, Asia Minor, used by early Christian hermits and still in use today

Although he had scarcely any formal education, Edgar Cayce became a doctor when in a trance state, and treated some 30,000 patients before his death in 1945. He also developed his own occult philosophy

EDGAR CAYCE

THE MIRACLE WORKER has always occupied a prominent position in unorthodox medicine, dealing with diseases considered incurable by more conventional doctors. Possibly the greatest occult diagnostician of modern times was Edgar Cayce (pronounced Casey) of Hopkinsville, Kentucky, known as 'the Man of Miracles' who died in 1945, at the age of 67 and whose early experiences had much in common with those of earlier mystics. As a child Cayce is said to have spoken with an angel, and to have seen visions of his dead grandfather. He was a shy, reserved boy with deep religious feelings, and although he never completed his schooling, he had a great love for reading, and went to work in a bookshop.

Cayce was only 16 when he first became aware of his power to heal. Lying in bed, after being hit in the back by a baseball, he suddenly ordered his mother to apply a poultice to the spot. She did so and by morning he had recovered completely, but could remember absolutely nothing of what had taken place. Not long after this experience he contracted a throat disease which threatened to reduce his voice to a permanent whisper. In despair he turned to a hypnotist for help but was incapable of entering the deep sleep that was necessary for this kind of treatment. But another hypnotist, Al Layne, helped him on this occasion and also played an important part in Cayce's development as a healer. Cayce put himself to sleep in Layne's presence and suddenly, speaking in a clear voice, said, 'Yes, we can see the body.' He prescribed the treatment necessary to restore circulation to the affected nerves of his throat, and Layne ordered the circulation to respond accordingly. A few minutes later Cayce woke up, completely healed.

Edgar Cayce's reputation as a healer soon began to attract the sick and suffering to him from every direction. They were all desperate for treatment, and the young man was often exhausted by his efforts to relieve ailments which had generally been given up as incurable by doctors. Much of Cayce's treatment was based on diagnosing spinal lesions as the cause of the disorder, and called for osteopathy and homoeopathy. Indeed, during most of the healing sessions he had the assistance of an osteopath. Cayce invariably went into a trance state which was followed by the diagnosis, starting with the words, 'Yes, we see the body.' The hypnotist Layne assisted in these operations, especially in the early days, but later a medical man was also present.

Typical of the cases passing through Cayce's hands was that of a woman crippled by arthritis and abandoned as incurable by her doctors. The treatment, prescribed during the trance state, involved dieting,

exercises and massage, and was fully successful in restoring the use of her limbs.

On another occasion he diagnosed a disorder affecting the wife of a doctor as pregnancy accompanied by a bowel disorder, after her own physician had declared her to be suffering from an abdominal tumour. Cayce proved accurate and the 'tumour' was soon resolved by a successful delivery.

Bed Bug Juice

Whenever possible Cayce tried to arrange for his patients to be treated by a qualified physician, but he often met with deeply entrenched opposition from the ranks of orthodox medicine. It was, however, a member of the medical profession, Dr Wesley Ketchum, a homoeopath, who vindicated Cayce's methods of treatment. Dr Ketchum was suffering from an illness that he had diagnosed as appendicitis, but being determined to put Cayce's skill to the test he asked for a reading, and was told that a spinal disorder was the cause of the trouble, and that he ought to consult an osteopath. Ketchum did this and was freed from discomfort. Convinced of the truth of Cayce's claims, he examined his records and submitted a highly favourable report to the American Society of Clinical Research at Boston. This was followed by an article in the *New York Times* of 9 October 1910 which brought Edgar Cayce's achievements



Edgar Cayce, the 'Man of Miracles': a psychic healer of great power, he was said to have spoken with an angel as a child. He was also clairvoyant, and once identified a murderer while in a trance state

as a healer to the attention of the nation.

The hordes of sick who now flocked to Cayce for treatment made it necessary to form an organization to carry out his work and the Association of National Investigators was created. A fully-staffed hospital was established at Virginia Beach, Virginia, and Cayce worked there. In 1931 this organization was succeeded by the Association for Research and Enlightenment, which accumulated records of the many thousands of medical cases he had treated.

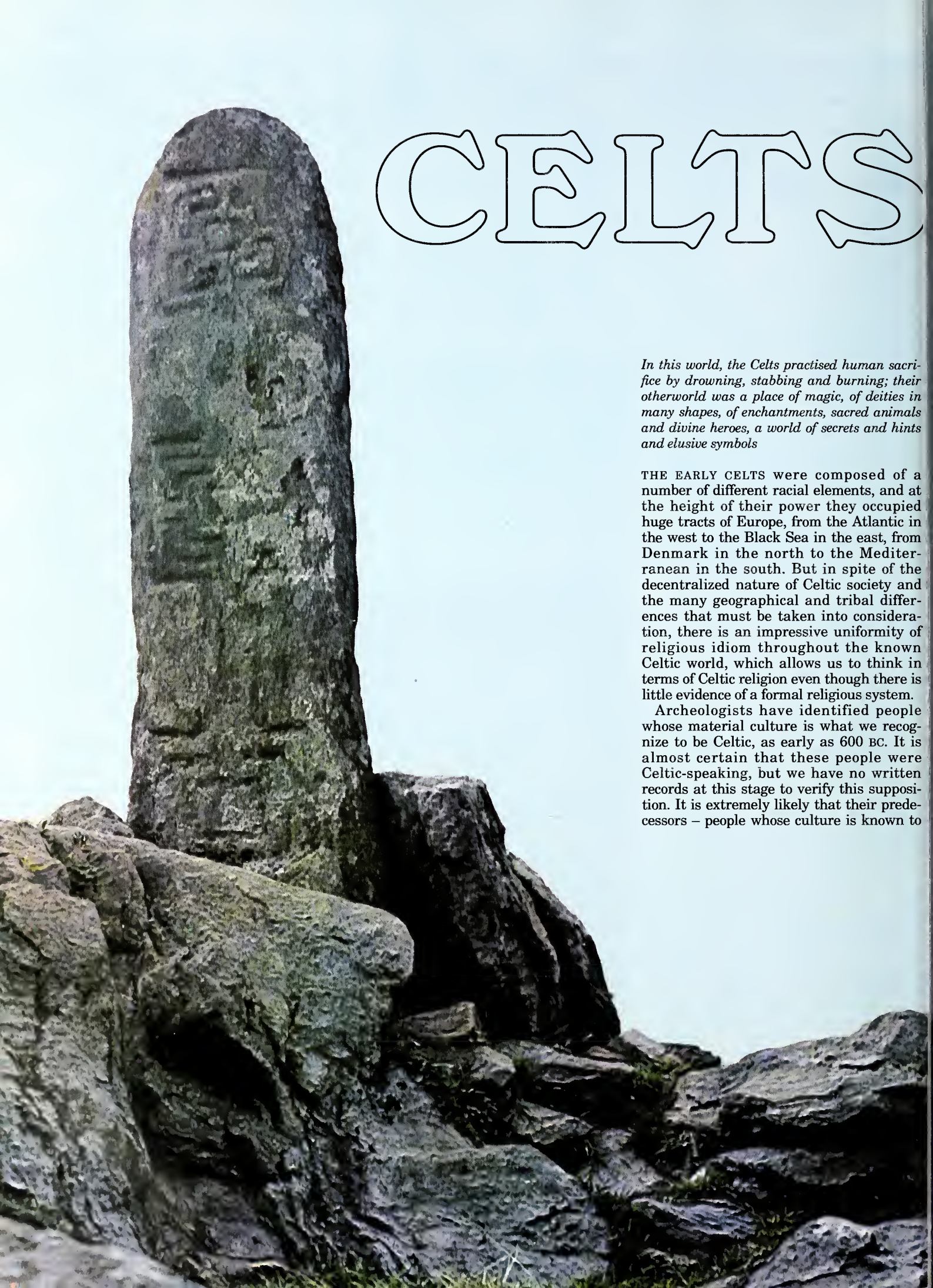
Quite apart from the homoeopathic and osteopathic techniques he employed, Cayce appears, on occasion, to have used forms of 'backwoods' therapy which were hardly likely to endear him to orthodox doctors. Remedies like bed bug juice for dropsy or oil of smoke for a leg sore had long been out of favour with a profession that tended to write off most folk medicine as quackery. Nor did his other ventures, into what was popularly known among doctors as 'Gas Pipe Therapy', enhance his reputation in medical circles. An example of this is described in Martin Gardner's *Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science*. 'One of his readings advised attaching the copper anode of a battery to the third dorsal plexus centre, and the nickel anode first to the left ankle, then to the right ankle.' Cayce also marketed a number of patent medicines, including Ipsab for pyorrhoea and Tim for haemorrhoids, and various devices for treating the sick with electricity and radio-activity.

The New Tomorrow

Apart from his powers as a psychic healer, Cayce was clairvoyant, and on one occasion discovered the identity of a murderer while in a trance. But he was accused of complicity in the crime by an unimaginative police officer in charge of the case, and after this he refused to carry out any further experiments in psychic detection. His aid was also frequently sought by relatives of those listed as missing in the First World War, an ordeal that he found particularly harrowing.

Like many others in the field of fringe medicine, Cayce created his own occult philosophy, much of which had developed from questions submitted to him while in a trance state. This credo seems to combine many of the elements of Theosophy, Christianity and Pyramidology, no doubt the result of Cayce's extensive reading in his youth. A journal called *The New Tomorrow*, published by his followers, increased Cayce's influence in occultist circles, as did his pamphlet *Auras* published in 1945. In this Cayce disclosed his ability to see the human aura (see DOUBLE) and predicted that colour therapy would eventually become an approved form of medicine.

When he died in 1945, worn out by a lifetime of dedication to the sick, and by the strains of both poverty and persistent medical opposition, Cayce left records of no less than 30,000 cases that he had treated over a period of 43 years. The Cayce Foundation of America continues to honour the name of a man who has been described as possibly the most remarkable healer that has lived.



CELTS

In this world, the Celts practised human sacrifice by drowning, stabbing and burning; their otherworld was a place of magic, of deities in many shapes, of enchantments, sacred animals and divine heroes, a world of secrets and hints and elusive symbols

THE EARLY CELTS were composed of a number of different racial elements, and at the height of their power they occupied huge tracts of Europe, from the Atlantic in the west to the Black Sea in the east, from Denmark in the north to the Mediterranean in the south. But in spite of the decentralized nature of Celtic society and the many geographical and tribal differences that must be taken into consideration, there is an impressive uniformity of religious idiom throughout the known Celtic world, which allows us to think in terms of Celtic religion even though there is little evidence of a formal religious system.

Archeologists have identified people whose material culture is what we recognize to be Celtic, as early as 600 BC. It is almost certain that these people were Celtic-speaking, but we have no written records at this stage to verify this supposition. It is extremely likely that their predecessors – people whose culture is known to

The great wine flagons, drinking vessels and joints of pork testify to a continuing belief in the otherworld as a place of revelry

archeologists as *Urnfield*, a late bronze-using people – also spoke Celtic. The evidence of names helps us here, the distribution of *Urnfield* remains coinciding in certain instances with very early Celtic place-names.

This first phase of Celtic culture is known as Hallstatt, a name derived from the extensive cemetery which was found at Hallstatt, near Salzburg in Austria, in the 19th century. Some 2500 graves were investigated, and their contents, together with discoveries made in the salt mines from which the people derived their wealth, tell us much about Celtic society at this period. The people grew rich through mining and trading the salt, a most valuable commodity in the ancient world. The chieftains used iron instead of bronze for their weapons, thereby improving their chances in warfare, and the technological superiority of the metal ensured a career of rapid expansion and conquest. These Hallstatt Celts were composed of the old indigenous *Urnfield* people combined with intrusive racial elements from the Asian steppes and more easterly regions. New skills in horse-rearing and management introduced from these areas, combined with better weapons and perhaps innovations in methods of warfare, helped the Hallstatt warriors to establish supremacy over a wide area.

The graves and their furnishings tell us not only about certain material aspects of society, but also hint at spiritual attitudes. The burials were elaborate, being under a mound, in a wooden chamber usually made of oak. They were furnished with richly decorated weapons and personal ornaments, many of them bearing symbols which we know from later evidence to have had a religious significance. Horse trappings, drinking vessels and joints of meat were provided for the otherworld feast, that great Celtic celebration beyond the grave. All these features point to powerful beliefs about the nature of personal survival after death, and are motifs which are repeated again and again in later Celtic history. The

Many pagan Celtic monuments were later Christianized, and pagan Celtic motifs thus entered Celtic Christian art: a Celtic cross at Glencolumbkille in Ireland, a site associated with St Columba

bodies of the wealthy dead were laid out, burnt or unburnt, on four-wheeled wagons.

Chariots of the Dead

The second stage in the history of the early Celts is known to archeologists as *La Tene*, from the site on Lake Neuchatel in Switzerland, where a great deposit of metalwork and other material was discovered in the 19th century. A wooden pier had been constructed over the water and the many articles had been thrown in, presumably as offerings to a specific god or to a plurality of deities and forces.

These articles were recognized to be Celtic, but they differed from those of the Hallstatt phase. New art styles had come into existence, showing amongst other things strong classical influences, and there was clear evidence of wider trade and cultural contacts and technological developments.

One of the most impressive changes in the still elaborately equipped graves is the presence of the light two-wheeled war chariot, which had replaced the four-wheeled wagon of the Hallstatt burials. This chariot is one of the most characteristic pieces of war equipment of the Celts. Archeology knows of it, the classical writers describe it, it is represented in art and it plays a prominent role in certain of the early Irish tales.

The new art style of *La Tene* shows a much wider contact with Etruria and the Mediterranean world than before. The great wine flagons found in the graves, together with fire dogs, drinking vessels and joints of pork – the favourite feasting food of the Celts – all testify to a continuing belief in the otherworld as a place of revelry, not gloom, in which equipment and provisions of this kind would be needed.

Each of the numerous Celtic tribes had its own ruler, its 'men of art', its laws and its customs; and in spite of the inevitable regional and temporal differences which give local variations, there is a fundamental similarity which is remarkable. In Gaul, kings had been replaced by chieftains by the time Julius Caesar invaded the country in the 1st century BC. In Ireland, the custom of kingship remained, the king being of supreme importance to society. He was regarded as semi-sacred, the earthly manifestation and voice of the god. A good

king ensured prosperity and fertility, good weather, rich harvests, freedom from plague and invasion, the general well-being of his people – as did the god himself. If the king was unsuitable in character or physically blemished, the supernatural forces were believed to show their dislike and displeasure by bringing disease and famine on mankind and blight on the earth.

Caesar describes the structure of Celtic society in his *De Bello Gallico* (book 6). 'Throughout Gaul there are two classes of men of some dignity and importance. The common people are nearly regarded as slaves: they possess no initiative and their views are never invited on any question. Most of them, being weighed down by debt or by heavy taxes or by the injustice of the more powerful, hand themselves over into slavery to the upper classes, who have all the same legal rights against these men that a master has towards his slave. Of the two distinguished classes, one is that of the Druids, the other that of the Knights. The Druids are concerned with the worship of the gods, they look after public and private sacrifice and they expound religious matters...The Knights take part in war whenever there is need and war is declared...The greater their rank and resources, the more dependents and clients they possess.'

This same threefold division of society is found in pagan Ireland, with the king of a district, great or small, and the various grades of freemen constituting the aristocracy, the Druids (priests) and the poets and lawyers likewise occupying a privileged position in society.

The Celts, speaking two different forms of the language, which are known as P-Celtic (spoken in Gaul and Britain) and Q-Celtic (spoken in Ireland, but traces also exist in continental Europe) were thus loosely linked by common origins and language, common religious traditions and a close similarity in their laws and systems of learning.

Unwritten Secrets

The Celts themselves did not commit their religious traditions to writing and so it is necessary to use a variety of sources of information to discover the nature of the religion and mythology of the pagan Celtic peoples. They were not illiterate, for we know that some of them used Greek for



business transactions. However, they regarded their laws, their genealogies and their history in the same sacred light as their religion. All these disciplines were required to be handed down orally from master to pupil, from priest to acolyte. It took some 20 years of intensive application to assimilate and master the secrets of Druidic lore. The oral tradition is fundamental to the Celtic temperament; a deep respect for it has continued down to the present day in the Celtic-speaking areas of Europe (Brittany, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man).

For information about Celtic religion on the continent of Europe, and to a lesser extent in Britain, there are the written comments of Greek and Roman authors, interested in noting the habits and customs of the barbarian peoples of Europe. From Roman times there are the sculptured monuments on which native gods, goddesses and cult symbols are figured, often in Roman guise, accompanied by a dedication to a native deity. There are inscriptions and native coins which often bear Celtic names and magical symbols, and there is the evidence of place-names.

Over and above this, the native literatures of Wales and Ireland, the oldest in Europe outside the classical world, form a great repository of mythology and pre-Christian practices. Although written down only in Christian times, the persistence and longevity of the oral tradition was such that we can be quite confident that there is a genuine core of true mythology to be found underneath the embellishments of the storytellers, the censorship of the Church, and the motifs borrowed from classical and Scandinavian sources.

All the evidence for pagan Celtic religion,

fragmentary and varied as it is, emphasizes the fact that the Celts were deeply conscious of religion. The inhabitants of the physical world and those of the otherworld – that gay land beyond the grave – were in constant communication with each other. There is nothing to show that the virtuous attained the otherworld after death for ethical reasons; nor is there any hint of a gloomy otherworld. The land of the gods could be entered in life by the clever, aggressive hero, by means of treachery or force. Or it could be attained by mortals through the invitation of an immortal being, who usually had amorous intentions. But for the Celt there was, and could be, no rigid division between the two territories.

At times, as on *Samain*, (1 November) the great religious feast of the Celts, which was a season of gloom and portent and sacrifice, the inhabitants of the otherworld became hostile and dangerous. They played tricks on mankind and caused panic and destruction. They had then to be appeased, and their powers turned once more in a direction favourable to mortals.

Wells Filled with Bones

The Celts did not as a rule build formal temples, in the manner of the Mediterranean world, but they did have clearly defined sanctuaries, which included structures of some sort, as well as making use of such natural features as hill-tops, open plains in the vicinity of sacred trees, groves, springs and wells, where we know that they gathered for the performance of ritual. These were places which had been made sacred by the cult legend of some deity, whose name is often enshrined in local place-names. The burial mound where the divine ancestor was interred, according to

tradition, and which was often considered to be an entrance to the otherworld, was sometimes a focal point for ritual. The simple earthen enclosure formed by a bank and a ditch, and containing perhaps some wooden or wickerwork structure in which cult images were housed: the burial place of some eminent person: a sacred pit filled with ritually smashed pottery and the bones of sacrificed humans and animals: a stone platform for sacrifice: all these are to be found in archeological contexts.

Again, the ritual shafts and wells found on the continent of Europe and in Britain filled with layers of objects which included dogs' heads, human bones and skulls, bracelets, ritually bent weapons, smashed pottery and intact vessels, and often with traces of buildings which stood near them or enclosed them – these also seem to have served as temples for the pagan Celts. Apart from one or two examples which are outside the main stream of Celtic tradition, there is little evidence for the construction of elaborate stone temples until the time came when they were built in Celtic areas under the sway of Rome. Roman and native deities alike were then worshipped, and classical and Celtic religious symbols were displayed in such temples.

The Celts have always tended to express things in an oblique fashion, abhorring direct statement, and this can be seen to operate very strongly in their religious idiom. They preferred the subtle allusion, the hint, the symbol: so that the sophisticated, obvious temple and the life-like portraits of the classical gods were alien to their way of thought and not easy for them to accept. Under the influence of Rome, however, such things were built and fashioned in accordance with Roman custom. But the

Left Head of a Celtic god surrounded by various animals which were sacred to the Celts, including the fabulous beaked, winged horse. The torc round his neck and the wheels on either side of him were often deposited with the dead: a detail from the Gundestrup cauldron in the Danish National Museum **Right** In addition to the more powerful deities the Celts worshipped a host of minor spirits, demons and fabulous creatures, many of whom could change shape at will. Stone carving of a monster holding severed human heads: the Celts were head hunters and worshipped the head

more subtle rites and symbols continued to exist in the background, appearing from time to time in native pottery or sculpture, in crude idols, in obscure hints and references in the Irish and Welsh written sources.

These people, then, carried out their rites and enacted their myths at prominent natural features or in sacred enclosures, beside wells, or near deeply-dug shafts and pits. Apart from gatherings within individual tribal communities, to commemorate some event concerned with a local god or goddess, there were the great Celtic calendar festivals, which were often celebrated on a plain beside a grave mound, or on a hill-top.

There were four main festivals in the Celtic year. *Imbolc* (1 February), a feast about which we have little detailed information, marked the coming of the ewes into milk. In Ireland this feast was sacred to Saint Brigit of Kildare, who no doubt took it over from her pagan predecessor, the goddess Brigit (see BRIGIT). *Beltane* (1 May) was a fire festival, traces of which have persisted to the present day in Celtic areas. Cattle about to be taken to the summer grazings were first driven through purificatory fires by the Druids.

Lughnasad (1 August) was sacred to the god Lugus, whose cult was widespread. It was a festival to mark the harvesting of the crops. Finally, the great feast of the year was *Samain*, celebrated on 1 November and the night before it: the barriers were down between mortal and immortal, visible and invisible, and sacrifice and correct performance of ritual were practised to keep the sinister gods at bay. Markets were held, games were played, law courts sat and public poetic recitations were given, while racing and feasting added zest to the gatherings which sometimes lasted for several days. During the festival any breach of the public peace was punishable by death. (See also ALL HALLOWS' EVE.)

The Druids

These feasts, and other more local celebrations, were held at the main sacred site of each tribe or region. The priests who officiated at these gatherings, the intercessors between the mortal and the divine, were extremely powerful. Some of them at least were known as Druids. There is evidence that there were priests other than Druids

but we know little about them. The name Druid seems to mean 'knowledge of the oak', and this would be appropriate in a society which held the oak in special awe. Maximus of Tyre, a philosopher of the 2nd century AD, reports that the Celts worshipped Zeus in the form of a tall oak tree.

Our knowledge of the Druids is scrappy and of unequal value. Modern lore about these priests stems only from antiquarianism, not from ancient testimony. In spite of the fragmentary nature of the real evidence it is clear that the Druids constituted a powerful and influential priesthood in some Celtic regions at least. They performed the sacrifices, read the omens, and appeased the gods by performing the rites correctly.

The Irish Druids figure as magicians,

teachers, shape-shifters (those with the ability to change form) and even buffoons, but whether this reflects their true role in early Irish society, or merely the fancies of later Christian writers, must remain in question. Their origins are shrouded in antiquity and there is no reason at all to suppose that they were newcomers, originating with the Celts themselves. Their order may have had a longer ancestry in Europe. (See DRUIDS.)

Death in a Sea of Flame

The Celts practised human sacrifice. The Romans considered this ritual to be barbarous and caused it to be discontinued. They also struck a lethal blow at the Druids, whose power and political influence was a



Jean Roubier



To the Celts horns were a powerful symbol of virility and divine power. They not only gave their gods horns but enhanced their chances of success in battle by wearing horned helmets: bronze horned mask from Norfolk

threat to the success of Roman campaigns in the Celtic areas. Caesar, referring to the practice of human sacrifice, describes the great images of interwoven branches which were filled with men and set alight, 'and the men die in a sea of flame'.

Three fierce Celtic gods, Teutates, Esus and Taranis, are mentioned by the Roman poet Lucan. A commentator on Lucan says that people sacrificed to Teutates were drowned or suffocated in a vat; those sacrificed to Esus were stabbed and then hung up in a tree; Taranis favoured burning. There is little definite in the Irish texts to demonstrate the nature of human sacrifices in that country, but it is certain that they were practised there also.

There are many dark hints and allusions

which suggest that the motif of the triple death (by drowning, stabbing and burning) was more than a literary convention, and echoed the tradition of sacrifices to the three great Gaulish gods. Several stories contain the motif of the tricking of the hero and his company into a house, the door of which is secured while they are feasted and made drunk. The building is then set on fire, and all perish in the conflagration or escape through the heroism and supernatural strength of the hero. There are hints of ritual drowning in tubs or wells, numerous examples of foundation sacrifices, even in Christian contexts, and episodes in the early stories which point to the sacrifice of infants.

Animals were certainly ritually killed and

the bull-sacrifice (*tarb-feis*) was an integral feature of the inauguration of a new king, a ceremony of deep religious significance in early Irish society. Bull-hides were used by the Druids to sleep on while they had their omen-giving dreams, having first chewed some of the flesh of a cat, a dog and a red pig, and consulted their 'idol gods'.

The All-Purpose God

It is extremely difficult to find any orderly pantheon in the Celtic gods and goddesses known to us, or any clear-cut division into deities of specific functions or departments. However, the knowledge that the structure of Celtic society was of a semi-sacred nature, that the king was regarded as the visible agent of the god – sometimes his son,

A Magic Kiss

One day Niall, son of Eochu Muigmedon King of Ireland, went hunting with his four brothers. They came across a hideous old woman guarding a well. 'She was as black as coal. Her hair was like a wild horse's tail. Her foul teeth were visible from ear to ear and were such as would sever a branch of green oak. Her eyes were black, her nose crooked and spread. Her body was scrawny, spotted and diseased. Her shins were bent. Her knees and ankles were thick, her shoulders broad, her nails were green.' As a price for the water in her well, the loathsome hag demanded a kiss from each of the brothers in turn; but only Niall overcame his revulsion and embraced her. Thereupon she was

transformed into a beautiful woman: 'She was as white as the last snow in a hollow. Her arms were fully and queenly, her fingers long and slender, her legs straight and gleaming . . .'

Reading these old tales, one has the impression that the Irish of past centuries lived on easy terms with the supernatural. If we can judge by the reactions of the characters themselves, no surprise was occasioned by the intervention of folk from the Otherworld, or by spells cast and shapes shifted. The natural order of things was something vaster and more flexible than we envisage today.

D. D. R. Owen

The Evolution of the Grail Legend



National Museum of Ireland

sometimes allegedly the mortal mate of the tribal goddess, the Earth Mother – suggests that the Celts thought of the world of the gods as being organized in a similar way; and there are hints of this in the Irish tradition.

Over and above the numerous tribal and local divinities, we hear of such powerful shadowy beings as Anu, or Danu, mother of the gods. Anu is referred to as 'she who nurtures well the gods'. Danu, from whom the Irish gods called the Tuatha De Danann ('Tribes of the Goddess Danu') are named, has Don as her equivalent in British mythology. Danu's three sons are the gods Brian, Iuchar and Iucharba, known to tradition as *fir tri ndea*, 'men of the three gods'. Brigit the goddess is elsewhere allegedly the mother of this powerful trio, and it may be that she is in fact Danu, known by another name.

One of the most difficult factors in any attempt to get a realistic idea of the nature of Celtic deities and their individual qualities is this custom of giving a single divinity a multiplicity of names, many of them merely descriptive epithets. As a result, much that is confusing in Celtic mythology may become clear if it can be convincingly demonstrated that certain major deities, though seemingly different, are in fact a single deity with a number of names, functions and manifestations. The undoubted power of Brigantia, goddess of the Brigantes, for example, suggests a high position in some supernatural hierarchy.

At present the evidence all points to a huge number of named gods and goddesses, with a comparably large assortment of attributes and symbols, but with a markedly limited range of functions. The tribal god was an all-purpose figure and, despite the differences in his name, he was basically the same throughout the Celtic lands. He was a 'good' god, like the Dagda of Ireland, protector of the tribe, giver of all that was good and desired, their leader in war, their ultimate judge in legal matters, lord of the otherworld feast, mate of the tribal goddess.

It seems that the god himself tended to move with the tribe when it set out for new conquests and territories. But the goddess, who was much concerned with the actual geographical region over which she presided, remained behind to be overcome by

the nextcomers, and to be killed or used for their own purposes, or mated with their own tribal god. Celtic gods and goddesses were not believed to be inviolable.

Over and above the basic pair, so well attested by representation in art, by inscriptions on stone and by the legends of the Celtic world, there were other gods and goddesses of lesser importance and limited but more specific functions. These deities were concerned primarily with the arts, with crafts such as that of the smith, with medicine and healing; or they presided over important local features such as sacred wells and rivers. But there must have been a good deal of overlapping, and the all-purpose god could, according to tradition, turn his hand to any skill or craft when the occasion demanded it.

The Savage Mother

Certain gods, such as Lugus (Irish Lugh, Welsh Lleu), Sucellos, Camulos, Esus, Teutates, have a fairly wide distribution in stone inscriptions and place-names, and some are known from the literary traditions. It is not clear whether these represent deities of a greater and more universal power than the local tribal gods, fathers of the gods themselves in fact, or whether their wider distribution is due to population movement and conquest. Or again, it may be that they were official gods of the Druids themselves, more concerned with 'national' than with tribal concerns.

The mother goddess of the Celts was often conceived of as a warrior, fighting with weapons and instructing the hero in superior secrets of warfare. She was also believed to be capable of influencing the outcome of battle, not by her weapons but by magic and incantation, sometimes taking the form of a sinister bird (crow or raven) and flying over the hosts, causing frenzy and confusion, foretelling the future, and rejoicing over the carnage.

The Celts believed it was undesirable and positively dangerous to name a sacred thing by its correct name. As a result the gods are often referred to in a roundabout way, as were other sacred matters. The Ulstermen, for example, do not swear by a named god but by 'the god by whom my people swear'. This is understood and sufficient to make the oath binding.

The number three was sacred to the

Hunting the ferocious wild boar was a popular and dangerous pastime, for it demanded great skill, and there are many legends of supernatural boars and their adventures in early Irish and Welsh literature

Celts. Sometimes they portrayed their deities in groups of three, or as having three heads or three faces. In the tales the deities or semi-divine heroes are described as being one of three people of the same name and birth, or as having been born three times in succession.

The Shape-Shifters

In addition to the powerful gods and goddesses with their many names and symbols, there are other and lesser supernatural beings – spirits and guardians of certain places, godlings and nymphs, sprites and demons. There were animals and birds which were sacred to the Celts, and many of the deities are represented as having bird or animal parts, or bird or animal servants and messengers. There were sacrificial beasts, and birds of good or evil omen, the companions of the gods, and their visible form on occasion.

The boar was held in high esteem by the Celts, its flesh being their choicest food; while the boar hunt was a favourite pastime. Several of the deities have names which link them with boar cults. There are many legends of supernatural boars and their adventures in the Irish and Welsh literary traditions. The otherworld feast is alleged to be sustained by magical pigs which, no matter how often they are cooked and eaten, are whole and alive again next day, ready for the next feast.

The bull also played an important role in mythology, while the horse, the stag (attribute of the Celtic stag god Cernunnos, 'the Horned One') the dog and the ram all figure in the world of Celtic mythology. The ram-headed serpent seems to have occupied a foremost place among the sacred animals, and various other fantastic beasts are figured or referred to in different contexts.

Shape-shifting or changing of form was allegedly much indulged in by the Druids and also by the deities, and several of the semi-mythological characters in the early legends take the form of an animal, some meeting their deaths while in this shape.



Picturepoint London

Birds, too, were regarded as playing a very distinctive and individual role, the crane being sinister and ominous, an idea which has continued on into modern folk belief. The swan was invariably the form taken by benevolent deities, often when engaged in amorous exploits, and sometimes wearing chains of gold or silver, their magical badge which set them apart from other birds.

The World of Magic

The otherworld of the Celts, was a world of magic rather than a world of formal doctrine and inflexible deities; a world which mattered in everyday life rather than at religious feasts and periodical rituals alone; a world not of gloom but of gaiety. Its inhabitants were conceived to be gods and goddesses

Stonehenge was built in pre-Celtic times but was almost certainly used as a temple by the Celtic Druids: the modern Druids still hold ceremonies there on Midsummer Day

whose attitude to human beings was not always beneficent, but who could be propitiated by those who knew the correct form. It was a world which could on occasion be entered by mortals; and the deities were likewise believed to be capable of appearing at will in the world of men — not always to the benefit of mankind. It was a world whose inhabitants must always be reckoned with and appeased; a world to keep at bay, to exploit, rather than to love.

This is the basic background of Celtic religion, with all its regional variations, its

local deities and its local patterns of worship, its different cult legends based on local sacred places and their own distinctive divine associations. This homogeneous background for local expression and tribal preference enables us to speak of pagan Celtic religion as a real, if elusive, thing. (See also CAULDRON; DRUIDS; HEAD; HORNS; MABINOGION; POETS; and articles on individual gods and heroes.)

ANNE ROSS

FURTHER READING: Anne Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain* (Columbia University Press, 1967); A. McBain, *Celtic Mythology and Religion* (Folcroft, 1976, c1917); T.G.E. Powell, *The Celts* (Thames and Hudson, 1980); Stuart Piggott, *Ancient Europe* (Aldine Publishing, 1966).

CENTAUR

CENTAURS WERE MONSTERS in the classical sense, in that these legendary creatures combined two species in one skin. They had human heads and arms and torsos, merging into the bodies of horses. Centaurs were often savage and unbridled, according to report. Yet they had much mysterious wisdom and virtues far surpassing those of ordinary men.

The ancient Greeks regarded the centaurs as fanciful celebrants who danced in the train of Dionysus, the wine god, but also believed that their own forefathers had both befriended and fought against centaurs in the days of old. The latter conviction probably had some basis in fact, for the name centaurs signifies 'those who round up bulls' and the idea of the centaur may well have sprung from the cattle-breeders of Thessaly in northern Greece, who spent much of their time on horseback and whose manners were rough and barbarous. Alternatively, it has been suggested that the original centaurs were Cimmerian and Scythian raiders, rough-riding nomads from the north, who often invaded Thrace in the north-east.

In mythology the origin of the centaur was more poetic. It was said that a most reprehensible mortal man named Ixion had founded the race. This Ixion committed the outrageous offence of daring to attempt to seduce Hera, wife to Zeus and queen of heaven itself. To see how far Ixion's impudence would go, Zeus formed a cloud image of Hera and substituted it for the goddess. A monster, Centaurus, was born of this strange union, and when grown to maturity, himself united with the mares of Mount Pelion and so produced the centaurs.

Another, more austere legend has it that Chiron was the first centaur. Chiron had begun life as a Titan, a primeval son of Cronus (see CRONUS) and the ocean nymph Philyra. He dared make war against the young gods of Olympus but they defeated him. Apollo, the god of light and reason, punished Chiron by making him half-horse.

Caeneus, in trying to prevent the half-human, half-horse centaurs from raping the women of the Lapith tribe, was mercilessly hammered into the ground by these monsters: stone relief from Olympia

He had been educated by the gods and in turn undertook the instruction of hero after hero: Actaeon, Jason, Castor and Polydeuces, and Achilles, each served an apprenticeship with Chiron in the wilderness.

But Chiron's own fate was an unhappy one. He fell wounded by a poisoned arrow in a tragic accident. The arrow came from the quiver of a good friend, the best of men, impetuous Hercules. There was no antidote to its poison. To escape the wound's unending agony, Chiron renounced immortality in favour of his fellow-Titan, Prometheus. Zeus then generously set the kindly centaur's image in the heavens as the constellation Sagittarius, the Archer.

Feast of the Lapiths

Artists have always delighted in the challenge centaurs offer them. Arnold Böcklin, the 19th century German painter, once painted a huge centaur who stoops into a blacksmith's shop to have his shoes repaired. Rubens sketched a boyish Achilles astride Chiron's broad back; the ageless tutor turns half-way round in mid-gallop to explain some abstruse point. One of Michelangelo's first sculptures was a bas-relief *Battle of the Centaurs*. His source was the Roman poet Ovid, who vividly describes a feast held by the Lapith tribe, a legendary people of Thessaly, to celebrate the nuptials of their chieftain Peirithous.

The centaurs were invited to attend that feast as friends but they got drunk and tried to drag the Lapith women forcibly off into the bushes. A brawl ensued, with slaughter on both sides, and the centaurs were driven away as darkness fell. According to another version, the centaur Eurytion was invited to the feast but became excited with the wine, attempted to abduct the bride, and was restrained by Theseus. Eurytion then returned to the attack with a band of centaurs, who were armed with slabs of stone and trunks of pine trees. A long battle followed from which the Lapiths eventually emerged victorious. The centaurs were driven to the frontiers of Epirus and sought shelter on Mount Pindus. It was this quarrel which sadly put an end to the ancient friendship between mankind and the centaurs.

Today in Greece, the peasants will tell you of *kallikantzaroï*, 'good centaurs', who appear to be descended from the old legendary creatures. But the 'good' which has been prefixed to their names in modern times is a precaution taken out of fear, as when a superstitious northerner refers to elves or fairies as 'the good people'. The *kallikantzaroï* come up out of the ground on winter nights. They are hoofed, shaggy, swift, stupid and mischievous. In short they are 'monsters' in the modern, and not the ancient, sense.

ALEXANDER ELIOT



Ceres

Roman goddess of corn and of the creative powers of the earth, the equivalent of the Greek Demeter; guardian of marriage, and associated with the dead under the earth and with the wine god; her name survives in our word 'cereal'.

See CORN, DEMETER.

Andy Weir



Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

Since 1948, an independent state: some 60% of its people are Buddhists, with a substantial minority of Hindus and smaller numbers of Christians and Moslems; a tooth and a footprint of Buddha are famous relics and objects of pilgrimage.

See SINHALESE BUDDHISM.

Ceylon High Commission



CHAKRAS

LITERALLY MEANING 'wheels' or 'lotuses' – chakras is the term most commonly applied to the organs, the centres of psychic energy, of the supposed subtle body or bodies. By 'subtle bodies' is meant the non-physical aspects of the human totality. How many of these aspects are considered to be associated with the physical body depends upon which particular mode of classification is being employed; thus, for instance, particular esoteric schools refer to two, six, and even nine subtle bodies, sometimes described as the vehicles of consciousness.

The seeming variations on this matter between different mystical systems and esoteric schools are found puzzling by most outsiders, but they are largely illusory, arising from the use of dissimilar nomenclature and the systems of sub-division used in some transcendental schools. Thus, for instance, what some mystics have simply called the psyche has been divided by others into three subtle vehicles which they have termed the etheric, lower astral, and upper astral bodies.

Interaction of the physical and subtle

Whatever particular system of subtle body classification is used, however, it is generally (although not universally) accepted that the organs of psychic energy, the chakras, are represented on every level of consciousness and that it is through them that the various subtle bodies of the individual human being interact with both one another and the physical body.

Thus the consequence of a spiritual change of state – good or ill – can supposedly be transmitted through the chakras to the material body, in this way effecting a change in physical state. And, conversely, it is held that changes in the physical body can influence higher vehicles of consciousness by transmission through the chakras.

The concept of the existence of psychic centres in the individual human totality is often thought of as being peculiar to the mysticism of the Indian sub-continent and countries, such as Nepal, deeply influenced by Indian religious philosophies. This is entirely incorrect. For although the concept is of much importance in Indian mystical philosophies, and although the very word *chakra* is of Sanskrit origin, similar ideas have been formulated in almost every part of the world and have been an integral element of a great many of the attempts which have been made to systematise mysticism and the interior experiences of its devotees.

Thus, for example, some varieties of the mysticism associated with the ancient Orthodox Churches of the East are concerned with a psychic centre situated in the solar plexus; the disciplines of Taoist alchemy are concerned with the Chinese equivalents of the major chakras; and the Tibetan yogi constructs, as it were, psychic centres in his or her own subtle bodies.

In none of these three examples is there any agreement as to the exact number of subtle bodies which may exist and be influenced by activities in the psychic centres.



Subtle bodies are the non-physical aspects of the human totality, and the chakras are their centres of psychic energy, through which communication between the physical and spiritual states is maintained: modern copy of a traditional Tibetan *tanka* of the spiritual body of man, with the seven principal chakras symbolically represented in their appropriate positions, from a private collection Facing page Traditional Nepalese representation of the seven lotus-petalled chakras

Nor – even in India and amongst esoteric schools directly derived from Hindu mystical sources in the sub-continent – is there any general agreement on the exact number of chakras to be found in the subtle bodies of an individual.

More than one late vernacular tantric text (see TANTRA) asserts that there are no less than 88,000 chakras – mercifully for students of esotericism neither the names nor the attributes of these are fully listed anywhere. Generally, however, it is agreed that there are only thirty or so psychic centres of any real importance, and only seven of these are looked upon as being of major importance to anyone save very advanced

students of Laya (also known as Kundalini) yoga (see KUNDALINI).

Each of the chakras – whether the number of them with which a particular esotericist is concerned is seven, thirty, or even the improbable 88,000 – is thought of as being associated with a particular part of the human body. The word associated has been emphasised because it is important to bear in mind that all psychic energy centres are thought of as being non-physical in essence and that by definition no chakra can be part of the material body. The relationship between any particular chakra and the area of the corporeal body with which it is supposedly associated can best be thought of as analogous to the presumed relationship between the mind and the brain in most classical western philosophical systems. That is, mind is regarded as associated with the brain, but in no way part of it.

The Seven Chakras

The seven chakras looked upon as being of prime importance are:

1. The *Muladhara*, closely associated with the perineum, the area of the body between the anus and the genitals.

2. The *Svadisthana*, associated with an area immediately above the genitals – very roughly the so-called Mount of Venus, or *mons veneris*, the area which in adulthood is covered with pubic hair.

3. The *Manipura*, which is thought to have its physical analogue in the area of the solar plexus. Interestingly enough D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930), the novelist and poet, developed a curious solar-lunar philosophy which was expressed in some of his later writings, in which the same area of the body was looked upon as being the site of what he called a 'great fiery vivifying pole' of psychic energy.

4. The *Anahata*, associated with that region of the body, in proximity to the heart, sometimes called the cardiac plexus. Curiously, D. H. Lawrence's system also posited the existence of a power centre linked to the same part of the body.

5. The *Vishuddha*, or throat chakra, associated with the area of the pharynx and larynx.

6. The *Ajna*, sometimes termed 'the third eye' and associated with the pineal gland, but more generally held to correspond with the middle of the head, from between the eyebrows to about half way down the nose.

7. The *Sahasrara*, a sort of crown to the physical body, associated with an area immediately above the head. This chakra is in a sense the most important of all, for it is thought of as being directly linked to not only the subtle bodies of the individual but to the psychic – indeed, divine – energies of the entire cosmos. As such a link it is held to be capable of being used in such a way that it can enable men and women to tap an infinite storehouse of psychic energy.

Many of the quasi-gymnastic, meditative and ritual techniques used by certain modern esoteric schools, eastern and western, are designed for the purpose of, metaphorically speaking, progressively 'setting ablaze' the seven key chakras. In other

words, vivifying them, exciting them fully into action with the intent of bringing into manifestation the spiritual gifts (some would say magical powers) that are associated with them.

There are many variant listings of these spiritual gifts, which sometimes seem to be understood in a fully literal sense, at others in only a symbolic one which each student of these mysteries must interpret for him or her self alone. A fairly typical list is as follows:

1. The vivification of the Muladhara chakra and the transmission of its influence to the material body endows the individual with complete self-control over the passions envy, lust, greed, hatred and so on. It is probably significant that all these passions seem to be connected, directly or indirectly, with the psychological drives associated with sexuality. For not only does this chakra have a presumed physical analogue in the region of the genitals but its vivification is held by some esotericists to influence directly the libido and the physical functioning of the gonads and ovaries.

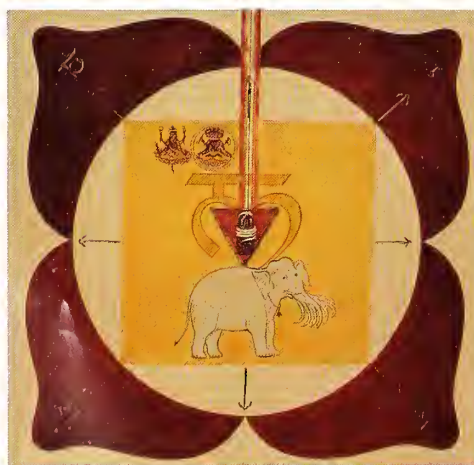
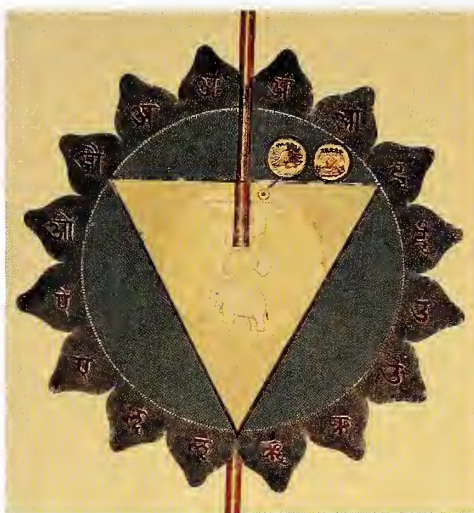
2. The vivification of the Svadisthana chakra and the transmission of its influence to the material body is held to confer 'mastery over the astral plane'. Exactly what this implies in terms of ordinary life is uncertain; some students who have endeavoured to combine ideas derived from the study of the traditional teachings concerning the functions of the chakras with Jungian psychology have asserted that it means coming to terms with those feminine aspects of the psyche which Jung named the anima (see COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS).

3. The vivification of the Manipura chakra and the transmission of its influence to the material body is asserted to confer 'mastery of the arts of alchemy and ritual magic' upon those who achieve it. This phrase may be intended to be interpreted in a literal sense, and many occultists have done so. It may instead (or also) have a metaphorical sense of magical transformations of consciousness, in which the base metal of ordinary existence is transmuted into the gold of spiritual illumination.

4. The vivification of the Anahata chakra and the transmission of its influence to the material body are alleged to confer so many and various spiritual benefits and supernormal powers that they cannot be listed in full. Such benefits and powers are claimed to include the ability to manipulate the sizes of objects and living beings, clairvoyance, and the art of making oneself invisible. As in the case of the Manipura chakra, all this may not be intended to be understood in a literal sense.

5. The vivification of the Vishuddha chakra and the transmission of its influence to the material body is claimed to confer the gift of 'eternal wisdom'. The exact meaning of this phrase is unclear, but it is certain that what is referred to is not wisdom in the ordinary sense of that word. Rather is it some sort of divine illumination, the exact nature of which is incapable of being understood save by those actually experiencing it.

6. The vivification of the Ajna chakra and the transmission of its influence to the



material body is held to confer liberation from the consequences of past actions. This last phrase derives its meaning from beliefs, originally Hindu, concerning reincarnation and the supposed burdens of karma – spiritual debts owed to other living creatures which are asserted to have been incurred as a consequence of deeds performed both in the present incarnation and carried forward from previous lives.

In other words, the vivification of the Ajna is thought to be productive of a spiritual illumination in which the karmic debit balance is reduced to nil and the individual is totally freed from the consequences of his or her wrongful actions. It is usually thought that the person who has achieved such a karmic liberation is free of the Wheel of Death and Rebirth, does not have to undergo any further incarnations unless he or she wishes to do so, and is possessed of something very like divine attributes.

7. The vivification of the Sahasrara chakra and the transmission of its influence to the material body would seem to be thought of as conferring spiritual gifts and supernormal powers which transcend even those brought about by the vivification of the Ajna. Quite what these are supposed to be is beyond the comprehension of those who have not proceeded far along the spiritual path which is thought to result in their acquisition. Those who possess them are regarded as being in a state of unity with the Supreme Divinity and, as such, their mode of being is incomprehensible to all those who do not share it.

Mystical Experience or Delusion?

From this it is apparent that the alleged results of the successful vivification of the seven major chakras are so many, so varied, and of such a remarkable nature, that one has to consider whether one is dealing with a body of beliefs based on fantasy, wishful thinking or imposture.

To some extent it is likely that this is indeed the case; spiritual fraudsters have always abounded and the history of mysticism is littered with examples of self-deceit.

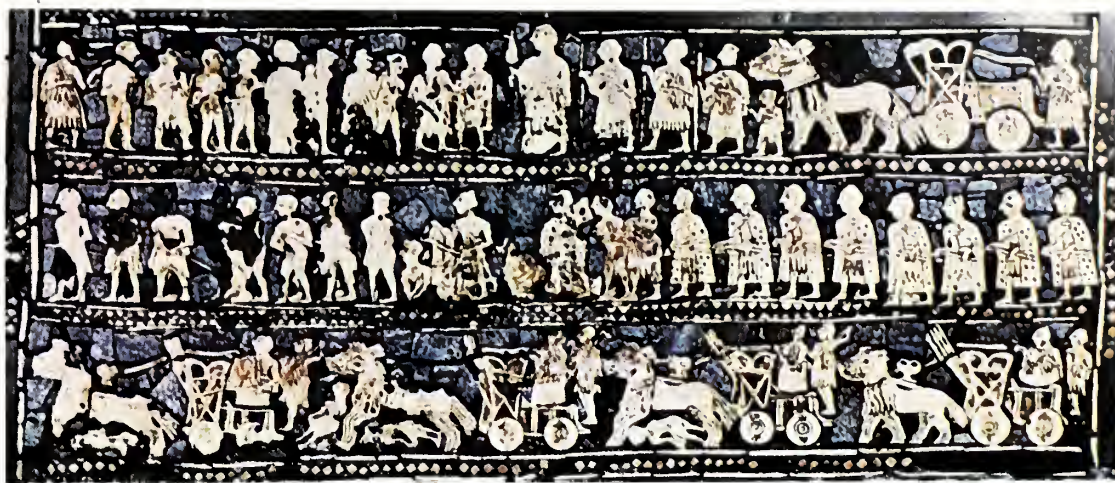
On the other hand the existence of spiritual frauds, fantasies and delusions does not disprove the existence of genuine spirituality. And so it is with the processes used with intent to vivify the chakras.

For there is strong evidence that while it is justifiable to be dubious in the extreme about some or all of the physical phenomena allegedly associated with chakra vivification – the power of invisibility, for example – there seems to be no reason to doubt the existence and value of the interior transformations that are claimed to be productive by those who believe they have experienced them.

Each chakra has its own symbol, represented by a lotus with a distinctive number of petals. *Left (from bottom to top) the four-petalled Muladhara or root chakra; the ten-petalled Manipura chakra associated with the solar plexus; the Anahata, or heart chakra; and the Vishuddha, or throat chakra: from Sir John Woodroffe's *The Serpent Power*, translated from the Sanskrit, 1928*

Chaldeans

A people of Mesopotamia, famed as astrologers, magicians and sages; Chaldean kings, the best known of whom are Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, ruled Babylonia for close to 100 years, until overthrown by the Persians in 589 BC, and rebuilt the temples of the city of 'Ur of the Chaldees'.



CHANGELING

THE BIRTH of a deformed, moronic or exceptionally ugly child is an old tragedy. One way to make the parents feel better is to decide that the child is not their own at all but a substitute, left by the fairies in place of the child they have stolen. How much pain has been suffered by children believed to be changelings no one can measure, but early in this century in Ireland a changeling child was burned to death on a hot shovel. In 1894, near Clonmel in Ireland, a young woman was burned to death as a changeling by her husband and family. There are many stories of a child being thrown out on a dungheap to die of exposure, and a favourite way of dealing with a changeling was to whip it until the fairies came to take it back.

A changeling can also be made to reveal its true form by making it laugh or making it cross water. It is sometimes a fairy child but more often an old, even senile fairy, disguised as an infant. A typical English changeling story tells how a woman's baby never grew, was always hungry, failed to learn to walk, and lay in its cradle year after year. The woman's older son, a soldier, coming home after a long absence, saw the child's strange and hairy face, and took an empty eggshell, which he filled with malt and hops, and heated on the fire. There was a laugh from the cradle. 'I am old, old, ever so old,' said the changeling, 'but I never saw a soldier brewing beer in an eggshell before.' Now he knew for sure that it was a changeling the soldier went for it with a whip, and it vanished through the door.

A baby was likely to be snatched away by the fairies before he had been christened, that is before he had been made a Christian and before he had been officially named, and so became a person in his own right. Ways to protect him were to draw a circle of fire round him, hang a pair of open scissors over him, or put his father's trousers across the cradle.

(See also BIRTH.)

'She never had so sweet a changeling', from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, an illustration by Arthur Rackham. Fairies were thought to steal human children and leave old, senile fairies in their places, disguised as children



CHANNELLING

ALMOST ENTIRELY REPLACING the 19th-century term 'mental mediumship' (see MEDIUMS), 'channelling' is a new word recently applied to an activity which is probably as old as humanity itself – the attainment of an altered state of human consciousness in which information is transmitted from supposedly supernatural sources to the material world. In other words, the channeller of today is believed to be performing the same function which is still that of the shaman in primitive societies and was carried out by the Delphic and other oracles in classical times (see ORACLE; SHAMAN).

The term derives from the concept that the human agent acts as a channel through which messages from a disembodied entity – variously identified as the Higher Self, the God Energy, the collective unconscious or 'spirit guides' – are transmitted.

There are only two substantial differences between contemporary channellers on the one hand, and the shaman, the oracle and the medium on the other. The first of these is that the latter have almost invariably delivered their messages in what was, or purported to be, a state of full trance, avowedly unaware of the words they uttered. In contrast, many modern channellers remain fully conscious of what they say, receiving the messages from the entities with which they are in touch, by a process akin to telepathy, as a 'still, small voice within'.

The second difference is that a minority of contemporary channellers believe themselves to be transmitters of messages and teachings from sources even stranger than those with which we are familiar from the literature of modern spiritualism; from, for example, Neanderthal men, the spirits believed to be incarnate in large stones – even from something as apparently inanimate as a Barbie doll.

The majority, nevertheless, channel in a style that has long been familiar to habitués of spiritualist seances: the messages they transmit originate frequently from Indian chiefs, Egyptian priests or Chinese sages. Among these 'guides' are numbered Silver Birch, who spoke through the British journalist Maurice Barbanell, and White Eagle, spiritual teacher of Grace Cooke; Ramtha, an allegedly 35,000-year-old who claims to have once lived in Atlantis (see ATLANTIS) and is channelled by J.Z. Knight, a former housewife from Washington; the obscure Lazaris, who speaks through Los Angeles art dealer Jach Pursel; and, perhaps most notorious of all, Seth, who began dictating a series of books to Jane Roberts and her husband in 1963 and continued for many years.

Although many channellers can, indeed, receive in a fully conscious condition, or in no more than a relaxed, meditative state, the more dramatic communications have come when the channeller is in deep trance. Of this kind was the manuscript dictated by Seth, between January 1970 and August 1971, through 'Ruburt', the male aspect of

Jane Roberts's trance personality. With almost no editing, the manuscript was published as a book, with the title *Seth Speaks: the Eternal Validity of the Soul*, in 1972.

The text provides Seth's explanation of how Jane Roberts communicates in trance:

There is an expansion of her consciousness and a projection of energy that is directed away from three-dimensional reality. This concentration away from the physical may make it appear as if her consciousness is blotted out. Instead, more is added to it. Now from my own field of reality I focus my attention toward the woman, but the words that she speaks – these words upon the pages – are not initially verbal at all...In these communications, Ruburt's consciousness expands, and yet focuses in a different dimension between his reality and mine, a field relatively free from distraction. Here I impress certain concepts upon him, with his permission and assent. They are not the personality who holds it or passes it on. Ruburt makes his verbal knowledge available for our use, and quite automatically the two of us together cause various words that will be spoken.

Channelling has attracted the attention of the rich and famous. The film actress

Shirley MacLaine has written extensively of her experiences, and appeared in a television feature, *Out on a Limb*, in which scenes of trance channelling were shown.

Artificial Elementals

Compared with such intensely human entities as Ramtha or Seth, the idea of a plastic doll – even one of which there are several hundred million identical images – endowed with the power of answering questions and the advertised 'stereotypical wisdom of the 60s and 70s' tends to strike even those inclined to a belief in the marvellous as somewhat ludicrous. In reality, however, the concept is perfectly acceptable, both to those present-day esotericists who believe that it is possible to create 'artificial elementals', and to those who accept the existence of the Collective Unconscious of Jungian depth psychology (see JUNG).

According to the late Dion Fortune (see FORTUNE), the twentieth century occult writer and practitioner of ritual magic who bore a large share of the responsibility for the popularisation of the concept of the artificial elemental, one of these created entities begins to come into existence whenever a sufficiently large number of people start to believe in its reality. If their faith in it is of such intensity that they try to communicate with it by prayer, invocation, or even the holding of imaginary conversations, the artificially created entity begins to accumulate power from the group-mind of those who pray or talk to it. And this power may eventually increase to such an extent that it can be, as it were, tapped by those who choose to tune into it.

If, for example, a sufficiently large number of men and women come to believe in the existence of a spirit or god concerned solely with radio communication and choose to implore its assistance, then that originally imaginary entity will not only come into existence but be able to communicate with its worshippers.

Dion Fortune was deeply influenced by Jungian theories, so much so that some esotericists have accused her of having 'psychologized the magical tradition'; that is to say adopted a reductionist approach in which all mystical experience was interpreted as essentially subjective.

Whether or not this was the case, there is a marked resemblance between her concept of how artificial elementals are created and Jungian ideas concerning the appearance of new forms of ancient archetypes in the Collective Unconscious.

From a Jungian point of view there is no reason why feminine or masculine archetypes should not manifest as Barbie and Ken, who could also be considered as artificial elementals. If one or both of these is the case, those who enter the depths of the Unconscious should indeed be able to channel Barbie – or any other entity, real or imaginary, which with which large numbers of people have concerned themselves.

FURTHER READING: J. Roberts, *Seth Speaks* (Prentice-Hall, 1972); S. Roman and D. Packer, *Opening to Channel* (H. J. Kramer Inc, 1987).

Channelling Barbie

Most Americans and Western Europeans are familiar with the form of the Barbie doll and its associates, such as Barbie's boy-friend Ken, and some of them, through their own or other people's children, probably feel that they have



a certain reluctant acquaintanceship with Barbie and her eternally youthful companions. The following advertisement appeared in the Winter 1992 issue of the small American magazine *Common Ground*:

'I channel Barbie, archetypal feminine plastic essence who embodies the stereotypical wisdom of the 60s and 70s. Since childhood I have been gifted with an intensely personal growth-oriented relationship with Barbie, the polyethylene essence who is 700 million teaching entities...I'm happy to answer your questions, and my enlightening newsletter shares my experiences as guided by Skipper, Ken, Poindexter, and my own Higher Inner Child. Send questions with \$3 to Barbara...San Anselmo, CA 94960.'

The grim boatman who ferries the souls of the newly-dead across a river is a very ancient concept, appearing in the mythologies of the Egyptians, Greeks and Etruscans

CHARON

THIS AGED AND IRASCIBLE boatman was believed by the Greeks to ferry the souls of the dead across the infernal river (the Acheron or Styx) which separated the land of the living from that of the dead. Charon is thus associated with Hermes Psychopompos (see HERMES), who summoned those appointed to die and led them to Hades. It has been thought that he was originally a death god, as was his Etruscan counterpart Charun. He is mentioned in Greek literature as early as the 5th century BC and is frequently depicted in art, particularly on the white-ground vases called *lecythi*.

Charon had to be paid for performing his sombre office of ferryman of the dead. It was customary to place an obolus, a silver coin, under the tongue or between the teeth of the corpse, to pay the fare. The shades of the dead who had not been properly buried, and thus equipped to cross into Hades, were refused passage by Charon and so left to haunt the living, seeking their release. The Roman poet Virgil draws a grim picture of the grisly ferryman in his *Aeneid* (Book 6). 'Charon, on whose chin lies a mass of unkempt, hoary hair; his eyes are staring orbs of flame; his squalid garb hangs by a knot from his shoulders. Unaided, he poles the boat, tends the sails, and in his murky craft conveys the dead.'

Though a pagan concept, the image of the grim boatman and his load of souls deeply affected the minds of many medieval and Renaissance Christians. Dante tells, in his *Divine Comedy*, of his encounter with Charon when he descends, with Virgil as his guide, into the Inferno. 'Charon, demonic form with eyes of burning coal, collects them all, beckoning, and each that lingers, with his oar strikes.' And Michelangelo, in the stupendous vision of the *Last Judgement* which he painted above the altar of the Sistine Chapel, depicts Charon and his fatal boat with a realism both terrifying and unforgettable.

The memory of the mythological Charon has now passed into modern Greek folklore where, under the related name of Charos,



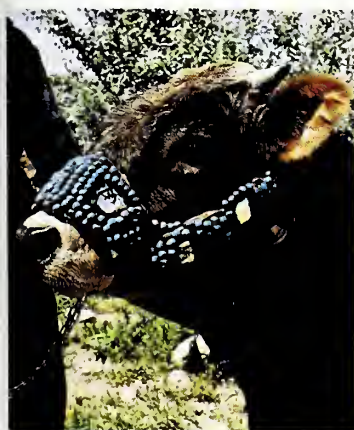
In Greek mythology Charon, the terrifying boatman of hell, ferried the souls of the dead across the river which separated the land of the living from the land of the dead

he carries off the young and old.

The Etruscans, that mysterious people who lived in central Italy and whose culture is known mainly from the evidence of their tombs, venerated a grisly deity called Charun. His demonic image appears on the walls of tombs, holding the hammer or mallet with which he dealt the death-blow to those whose destined time had come. This Etruscan Charun is clearly a death god; whether there was an original connection between him and the Greek Charon, as their names suggest, has not been proved.

The idea that the newly dead have to

cross a river to reach the land of the dead is very ancient. It occurs in the Egyptian Pyramid Texts (c2400 BC) and many means of transport are devised. The most notable, in the present connection, is that of securing passage in a boat manned by one named 'He who looks behind'. The name is significant, for this Egyptian ferryman, like the Greek Charon, is a difficult character and has to be persuaded or threatened into taking the deceased to the next world. The vignette which illustrates Chapter XCIII of the Book of the Dead shows the deceased addressing a man or deity seated in a boat, whose head is turned backwards. In the ancient Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh a similar idea occurs: the hero is ferried over the 'water of death' by Urshanabi, the boatman. (See also HELL.)



Sonia Haliday

Charm

A spell: a form of words or an object believed to contain magic power, hence its broader meaning of attractiveness, fascination, allure or, as a verb, to enchant or bewitch; derived from the Latin *carmen*, 'a song'. See IMITATIVE MAGIC; INCANTATION; TALISMAN.



ZFA

Cherub

In Jewish and Christian tradition, a type of angel, a winged being with a human head: descended from creatures with animal bodies, wings and human faces, believed in ancient Mesopotamia to intercede for man with the gods; two cherubim 15 feet high stood in the Holy of Holies, the dwelling of God, in Solomon's temple at Jerusalem: later, a cherub is represented in art as a beautiful child. See GUARDIAN SPIRITS.

Traditional oriental medical techniques intended to restore the flow of the life-force or vital energy in the body have gained much ground in the West

CHI

CHI, QI OR KI, dependent upon which system is used to transliterate Chinese or Japanese letters into the Western alphabet, is a concept of fundamental importance in Chinese and Japanese traditional medicine, acupuncture, and some of the oriental martial arts (it also corresponds to *prana* in Indian thought). According to traditional theory in China, Chi was the original cosmic cell from which the whole universe developed. Caused to vibrate by an agency called Tao, the cell split into opposite and complementary halves, the great universal forces of Yin and Yang, positive and negative, whose interplay runs through the entire cosmos (see CHINA, TAOISM).

Chi is identified with air and breath, the element without which life cannot exist, but it is also the life-force itself, the vast, surging current of vital energy which flows through the world and the human body. According to the theory of acupuncture, Chi circulates through the body from the lungs by way of channels called meridians. If for some reason it does not flow correctly, the body and its organs will suffer from too much of the vital energy or too little, and the procedures of acupuncture are meant to correct the situation (see ACUPUNCTURE). For example, if a patient is suffering from backache, the traditional Chinese diagnosis is that Chi is not passing through the bladder meridian as it should. A needle inserted at the correct point in the back will put things right. Chi contains and unites the forces of Yang and Yin, and the technique depends on the principle of restoring the healthful equilibrium in the system.

Walking on the Patient

Acupressure works on the same principle as acupuncture, but by pressing firmly and deeply with the thumb and fingers on the traditional Chinese acupuncture points, instead of using needles. Similarly Shiatsu, which developed centuries ago in Japan under Chinese influence, uses pressing and massage to correct the flow of Ki, the life-force, along the meridians, the channels or pathways in the body. These are basically the same as those employed in acupuncture, and the points where Ki is close to the surface of the skin are called acupoints or *tsubos*. Shiatsu therapists may use their fingers, thumbs, palms, forearms, elbows or knees, or they may sometimes walk on the patient. Many also employ a technique called moxibustion, which involves heating one of the *tsubos* by burning the herb moxa (*Artemisia vulgaris*) on the skin, removing it when the patient feels the warmth and before the skin is burnt.

Like oriental medicine in general, Shiatsu regards the body and the mind as a whole and treats the entire organism. Thoughts and emotions are regarded as Ki in relatively insubstantial forms, and body and mind affect each other. The channel

that runs through the kidneys, for instance, is said to influence willpower and the capacity for fear. Shiatsu treatment is claimed to promote not only physical relaxation and well-being, but mental and spiritual health as well.

Other alternative therapies which have become increasingly popular in the West take a similar approach. Polarity therapy, for example, popularized in the 1950s by Randolph Stone, an American, on the basis of oriental techniques, regards all disease as caused by a blockage of the current of vital energy – Chi or Ki or Prana – and uses the hands to restore the flow. This is reinforced by a prescribed diet, exercises and simple yoga-style positions, and encouragement of a positive mental attitude helpful to health.



Equated with air and breath, Chi is also the life-force itself, the vast surging current of vital energy which flows through the world and the human body. From the lungs it circulates through the body by means of channels known as meridians. This is the theory behind such therapeutic practices as acupuncture: a traditional chart representing the meridians and the principal acupuncture or pressure points

The Unbendable Arm

Oriental martial arts, again, have an important spiritual aspect as well as their obvious physical side. They aim to produce pupils who are not only highly skilled fighters adept at self-defence, but who have mastered mental tranquillity and attained a high degree of spiritual enlightenment, which is necessary for their physical prowess. The physical, mental and spiritual aspects are not separate, but facets of the whole. Aikido, for instance, which was founded in Japan around the beginning of this century, puts as much stress on training the mind and spirit as the body, to tap the universal energy of Ki and put it to use – not so much in defeating an opponent as in making the most of oneself.

An example is the Aikido exercise of the unbendable arm. It involves extending the right arm to the front and asking the opponent to bend it. This a vigorous opponent will readily do if the arm is held rigid, but if the arm is stretched out easily with the eyes fixed on a distant point, while it is imagined as a rubber pipe through which water is flowing to that point, the opponent will find it far more difficult to bend the arm. The imagined flow of water is the current of Chi.

Searching for the Needle

T'ai Chi, or T'ai Chi Chuan, which has become slowly more popular since it was first introduced into the West in the 1950s, is a Chinese therapy-cum-martial art which has been summed up as an 'art of movement meditation'. At its simplest level in China, it is a set of early morning, keep-fit exercises. At a more sophisticated level, a T'ai Chi routine looks like a slow, fluid dance, harmonious and effortless. Its purpose is self-mastery.

T'ai Chi amounts to Taoism in motion, in which the human being is united with the flow of the universal energy and the unification of opposites that keeps the universe in being. There are some hundred movements in a complete routine, taking about half an hour to perform, and they have evocative names, such as Searching for the Needle at the Bottom of the Sea, or Embrace Tiger, Return to Mountain.

According to legend, T'ai Chi was first developed in the 12th century. The movements, so the story goes, were worked out by the founder of the art, Chang San-Feng, who one day watched a crane and a snake fighting in his garden. The crane tried to jab the snake with its sharp beak, but the snake moved its head to one side and darted its head at the crane's neck. The bird raised one wing in protection and the snake tried to strike the crane's leg. The crane raised its leg and lowered the other wing to ward the snake off. This went on until both crane and snake were exhausted and resentfully gave up the contest, neither having managed to injure the other. What struck Chang San-Feng was the principle of yielding in the face of strength instead of resisting, and he is said to have based the movements of T'ai Chi on the movements of the crane and the snake. (See also MARTIAL ARTS; ORIENTAL TRADITIONAL MEDICINE).



Underlying the naive simplicity of many traditional children's games are a variety of ancient themes, many of which are neither simple nor quaint

CHILDREN'S GAMES

TRADITIONAL CHILDREN'S games tend to consist of more or less standard movements and actions, often complicated by the accompaniment of a rhyme or chant. Older games, which today's parents and grandparents may remember from their non-televisual childhoods, generally have long roots stretching back to Britain and Europe. But, old or new, a considerable number of games have roots or antecedents that go further back – to a time when such activities were adult concerns. So most children's games can be viewed as survivals, in varying degrees, of once-important rituals or ritual dramas involving the whole community.

In past ages, children were more closely integrated into adult life, as they still are among more primitive peoples. It is not surprising, then, that the flourishing oral lore of children has perpetuated and transmitted, over the years, ritual relics that were once very serious necessities.

Take for instance the most famous game inherited from England, *London Bridge*, traditionally played in the United States with some curious variations. Basically, two children stand facing each other, hands clasped and arms raised to form an arch. The others run under the arch, until at a signal the arch descends and traps a child. When all players have been captured, the American game ends with a tug-of-war – which lasts until one child lets go and breaks the line. That child is then victimized in some way. Other variations include the corruption of the original song:

London Bridge is broken down,
Dance o'er my lady lee,
London Bridge is broken down,
With a gay lady.

These lines have now been drastically simplified to:

London Bridge is falling down,
Falling down, falling down,
London Bridge is falling down,
My fair lady.

But the change is just a normal mutation, no more significant than the use in colonial Massachusetts of Charleston Bridge as the game's locale.

No, it is the act of 'trapping' players and the final isolation of a victim, that most interests the folklorists. They see in it a reflection of the world-wide belief that some sort of sacrifice is required for successful bridge building. Often, the victim was interred alive in the foundations of the bridge. (See BRIDGES.)

Also, perhaps more imaginatively, some experts see in the tug-of-war a hint of old European games involving a symbolic contest between forces of good and evil, usually taking place on a pretended bridge. So the two children forming the arch were demonic or angelic 'keepers of the bridge', deciding the fate hereafter of the others. It was so, certainly, in a game called *Bridge of Holland* once played by children of Pennsylvania's German immigrants.

The Ritual Drama

The supernatural, on a fairy tale level, appears also in a game called *Old Witch*, at one time widely popular with American children. The child playing the witch uses standardized tricks to steal away other players from their 'mother'; the latter must find them and use similar formula tricks to rescue them. There are no winners and losers – there is merely a strong current of ritual drama, performed for its own sake, as with many others of these quasi-dramatic games.

The Farmer in the Dell, for instance, takes its drama from the assigning of roles – one child as farmer to begin, then 'the farmer takes a wife', 'the wife takes a child', and so on. The last player to be chosen is a cheese taken by a rat.

We might see an element of victimization again here, though whether the victim is sacrifice, scapegoat, initiate or otherwise is not immediately obvious. Elements of primitive tribal 'testing' rituals – initiations, ordeals or whatever – may be reflected not only in the rites performed by new members of present-day clubs and fraternities, but also in children's games of the *Forfeits* or *Truth or Consequences* kind.

In these, a player's failure to answer a question, or perform a required action, correctly makes him liable to undergo some

unpleasant trial or punishment. The initiate-victim concept also appears in games like *Tag*, or *Blind Man's Buff*, where one player stands alone against the rest, seeking to catch someone to take his place. *Blind Man's Buff* is known by many names all over the world: its initiation elements may be more apparent in an American variant, where the players revolve in a ring around the blindfolded player, until the blind one raps with a staff on the floor. He then points the staff at the ring; the player singled out in this way emits some noise, in a disguised voice, and the blind one tries to guess who it is. If he guesses correctly, the child identified must assume the blindfold.

Anyone who remembers the games of his own childhood will be able to call to mind those others which retain some hints of this testing, or initiation, 'one-against-all' ritual. We can find patterns akin to it in *Hide and Seek* or even *Thimble*, *Thimble* (also called *Hunt the Thimble*), both still popular among children. We can find it very clearly in that well-known test of courage and daring called *Follow the Leader*. And we can find it in a simulated war game like *King of the Castle*, where one child tries to hold the top of a rise, or some elevated place, against all besiegers.

A once-popular ball game, variously called *Alley Alley Over* or *Haley Over* is equally a war game, but for two opposing groups, and so is less akin to an initiation rite than to straightforward mimetic ritual. Two groups of boys stand on opposite sides of a house, and one throws a ball over the house, calling out the game's title. Whoever catches the ball then runs (or sneaks) around to the 'enemy' side and tries to hit an opponent with the ball. Anyone hit is a prisoner of war, whereupon the ball is

The 'love games' of children may be associated with both fertility rites and with imitation of adult concern with marriage. Above Two ring games, *In and Out the Dusty Bluebells* (left) and the more modern *I'm Going to Kentucky* (right), both involve finding a 'fair lady' and are also enactments of grown-up courtship and marriage

Following page Many games still played can be seen in Breughel's *Children's Games*, painted in 1560. Fragments of old rituals and beliefs have survived in games which have their roots in the past





thrown back in the opposite direction and the other side has a chance to obtain a prisoner. The game ends when all one side has been captured.

Fertility Rites

Lurking prominently in the background behind many children's games is that all-inclusive category of primitive ritual, the fertility rite. The theme of celebrating fertility may lie behind the game (imitating adult work) called *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*, inherited from England along with a more specifically fertile, though now less popular, game based on the song *Gathering Nuts in May*. But then practically any game like these involving a dance-like circular movement or ring can be labelled with fertility implications, as long as all the players are included in the ring.

One old game of this sort, probably almost unknown today, was called *Oats, Pease, Beans and Barley Grows* in the United States. It held other names in Europe, where it flourished for centuries, mentioned by Froissart in the 14th century and Rabelais in the 15th. Players circle solemnly, singing or chanting lines that still hold much of the religious awe of the old 'mysteries' and true fertility rites:

Oats, pease, beans and barley grows,
How, you nor I nor nobody knows.

The game can become imitative of a marriage rite, with a boy and a girl within the circle and the children chorusing good advice.

It may be more difficult to see fertility magic in that long-lived round game for small children, *Ring Around the Rosy*, the verses of which (in some modern versions) end with a sneezing noise and then 'we all fall down'.

But it seems even more fanciful to follow some modern writers in tracing the game's origin back to the Great Plague. Perhaps victims of the 'Red Death' were rosy with blood and afflicted with sneezing; certainly, in the end, they all fell down. But the game originally did not contain these precise words, on which the theory is based. Instead, older and better forms turn out to have been sacrificial-victim games, isolating one player with a forfeit to pay – as in a famous 19th century version:

Round the ring of roses,
Pots full of posies,
The one who stoops last
Shall tell whom she loves best

So the child who was slowest to 'fall down' had to make a blushing admission. A common variant played in more recent times also demanded a victim, but much less poetically:

Ring around the roses,
Pocket full of posies,
One, two, three – squat!

Crude as it is, this version still demanded the singling out of a victim of love – which may not be all that close to the object of fertility rituals, but is certainly a long way further from a gory death by plague.

Other games seek to draw from children an admission of love, or function as forms of love divination, and so stand perhaps at the threshold of the fertility theme. The counting game *Rich Man, Poor Man* supposedly foretells what sort of person the player will marry. A Hallowe'en game like ducking or bobbing for apples floating in a basin of water grew out of similar games for young adults; each apple bore a player's name, and you would marry the one whose apple you managed to bite. Sometimes the apple was hung from a string, and a boy and girl tried to bite into it from opposite sides – with every chance for mouth-to-mouth contact. (See ALL HALLOWS EVE.)

And love games come into the *Forfeits* kind of play. A fairly modern game called *Spin the Bottle* requires the children to sit in a ring while a bottle on its side is spun in the centre. The player at whom the neck of the bottle points must confess whom he or she loves, and must sometimes kiss the object of affection, or else face a forfeit.

Most of the games mentioned so far have been akin, one way or another, to religious activity of older times. The links may sometimes seem rather strained, remote or unlikely – but some connections can usually be made. As a final and vivid illustration, take that universal game generally called *Hopscotch* – except by the Scots, who call it *Peever*. The players mark out a specified pattern of squares on the ground, or with chalk on a city sidewalk, and kick a marker through the squares in a fixed order, while

hopping on one foot from square to square in its wake. No more than a test of agility, it seems – until it is noted that in many versions the squares are arranged in special ways, two of which are the traditional shapes of the maze and the basilica (the latter containing seven squares, roughly the plan of a church). So, it seems, the progress through the diagram – without stepping on any line or losing balance – reflects the progress of the human soul through the trials of life towards salvation, indicated by the upper square, which indeed is often rounded or domed. This analysis may seem to be too much symbolic weight to be carried by a children's game. But remember that children and their lore are notoriously conservative, that many of these games are as old as Western civilization – and that symbol and myth and ritualization are not so alien to children's lives.

The Myths Survive

The act of mythologizing can be seen to permeate even those most up-to-date games involving cops and robbers, cowboys and Indians, Batman or spacemen. Here the children are imitating the myth heroes of their imaginative world, just as earlier generations performed mimetic ceremonies in which their gods and heroes were portrayed (and realized). Even in those games that approach the nature of organized sport, the element of ritual has a place. In spring, when the ground is barely clear of snow in many temperate areas, it is the season for those complex and intent games of marbles, the rules and skills of which are as complex and demanding as those of a Navaho healing ceremony. Some weeks later, the time for playing marbles is over: all the children know it, by some unspoken but inflexibly binding, almost instinctual law. Perhaps this is the same instinctual process, diminished but still active, that led men in the ancient days to regulate their seasonal celebrations, evocations and ceremonial magics. (See also NURSERY RHYMES.)

DOUGLAS HILL

FURTHER READING: Iona and Peter Opie, *Children's Games in Street and Playground* (Oxford University Press, 1969); W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children* (Harper, 1883).

Offspring of Typhon, a dreaded being associated with storm and tempest, and Echidna, who was part woman and part serpent, the Chimaera was a misbegotten monster of Greek mythology which belched fire as it breathed

CHIMAERA

THE CHIMAERA was a monster compounded of parts from three creatures: lion, goat and serpent. It appears in Homer's *Iliad* (books 6 and 16) as located in Lycia, in Asia Minor where it is killed by the hero Bellerophon. Bellerophon's legend contains many more adventures than his battle with the Chimaera, but these additional features belong to other, unrelated, parts of the

legend and need not concern us here.

Bellerophon was already disliked by his ruler, Proetus, the king of Ephyre in Argolis, a place usually identified with Corinth. He was also disliked by Proetus's wife Anteia, who tried to seduce him and failed. In revenge, she accused him of making advances to her. Proetus did not try to kill him directly, but sent him to Iobates of Lycia, his father-in-law. Bellerophon was at first well received by Iobates, but when the king read the calumnious letter that he brought, containing secret instructions that Bellerophon should be killed, he plotted his death by ordering him to slay the Chimaera.

The Chimaera was of divine, not human origin, being 'a lion at the front, a serpent

at the rear and in the middle a *chimaera*.' This word, which seems to leave part of its body unexplained, meant 'goat'. 'The Chimaera breathed flashing fire. But Bellerophon killed it, relying on marvels from the gods.'

He then fought his way through other perils until he married the king's daughter. The Chimaera is called *amaimaketos*, an epithet which is otherwise used of fire and probably means 'raging', though some ancient writers used it to mean 'invincible'. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, probably written in the 8th century BC, the Chimaera is mentioned as born by Echidna to Typhon with other monsters: Orthus, Geryon's hound, Cerberus and the Hydra. Typhon's origin was certainly in Lycia, so that scholars who

say that the Chimaera's location there is only secondary are probably wrong.

Hesiod says that the Chimaera had three heads, one belonging to each component animal, that it was killed by Pegasus and Bellerophon, and that by Orthus it was the mother of the Sphinx and the Nemean lion. A fragment of Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women* which mentions the legend of Bellerophon seems to be our earliest explicit reference to Pegasus as the name of his horse. Pindar alludes very briefly to Bellerophon's killing of the Chimaera.

Apollodorus, at the end of his history of Greek mythology, written in the 2nd century BC, once more gives the story of Bellerophon. Of the Chimaera he says that it was more than a match for many men, and

that through its middle head, that of a goat, it belched fire. It was a single creature with the power of three beasts. Bellerophon, soaring high on his winged horse, Pegasus, shot down the Chimaera from the height. Pegasus was thus a necessary means for its killing.

A celebrated representation of the Chimaera in art is the Etruscan bronze figure found at Arezzo in Tuscany, which

Famous Etruscan bronze of the Chimaera in the Archeological Museum, Florence. The name of this mythical monster, which once described a beast compounded of a lion, a goat and a serpent, has come to be used for any hybrid plant or animal or in a metaphorical sense for any imaginary fear.

shows a powerful lion's body, limbs and head, a goat's head rising from its back, and a tail consisting of a serpent's body and head.

This has an affinity with a Hittite winged lion from Carchemish on the Euphrates which has a snake for its tail and a second and human head rising from its back. The fiery breath of the Chimaera may be a mythical rendering of the flaming gas that rises from the ground here and there in the south-west of Anatolia.

Alternatively, it has been suggested that the Chimaera was a personification of the storm-cloud. Nowadays the word is used to describe any fantastic or horrible imaginary creature, and is also the term applied by biologists to plants and animals having hybrid characteristics.



CHINA

供
之



Twin ethers encompassing the universe are known as Yin and Yang: the Yin ether is of the earth, dark, female, heavy; while that of Yang is of heaven, bright, male, light

Traditional Chinese religion, surprisingly, has something in common with Maoist ideology in that both have a strong social purpose. Long before the Communists took over, the Chinese government 'adopted' the ancient pantheon of gods and turned them into a celestial bureaucracy, with a supernatural emperor at the apex, supported by divine 'officials' of all ranks, down to the gods of the household

RELIGION IN CHINA has always been deeply embedded in the social system, and it is not possible to consider the one without the other. It is among the world's richest religions. Intermingled with the strands of Buddhism, Taoism, ancestor worship, folk religion and Confucianism is a deep concern with the fate of society. From this complex background three major interests emerge.

One interest was in man, in his individual relationship to the universe: Taoism has been its important representative. The second was in man as a being important in the future of the world, and has been represented by Buddhism. The third concern was with society rather than with man as an individual or the world at large. This 'social religion', was represented by a set of ideas which had no name of its own (although some of its parts had names) and is of central importance for understanding China.

Buddhism and Taoism are considered here largely in their role of providing social religion with some of its materials, or providing important alternative beliefs for individuals with problems in adjusting to society in different circumstances or stages of life (see also BUDDHISM; TAOISM). The period of recorded religious development in China is extremely long, going back to the Shang dynasty of the 18th to 12th centuries BC, but we are mainly concerned here with modern China.

In China today, millions of people, some speaking mutually unintelligible dialects and spread over vast areas, live under one central control. The problem of maintaining social and cultural unity is very great. This is no new problem, for it existed as early as

the Chou dynasty (12th-3rd centuries BC), when the people we call Chinese first began to expand rapidly into areas inhabited by people of different cultures.

Religion was always a major means for dealing with the problem. Even the foreign (Manchu) Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911 AD) used Chinese religion to govern the Chinese and the peoples they had absorbed.

Religion became a means of social control by absorbing, over the centuries, most of the local cults and bringing them together under the Chinese system. This was originally the worship of heaven, of the ancestors and of a host of gods and spirits. The Former Han period (from 206 BC to 220 AD) was a time of great expansion, during which the system was given a new basis in a total theory of the universe, meaningful to all under Chinese control. Gradually, two levels for appreciating this theory developed.

One level of the system was very sophisticated and the concepts used impersonal or semi-personal. The other was 'religious' in the more conventional sense: it involved gods and other spirits. (The two levels are also present in other systems, including both Taoism and Buddhism.) The first level was meant for the scholarly and the second for the less educated, who could not read formal texts. They received their ideas from proverbs, 'good books' written in simple characters, folk stories which were told rather than read, and from pictorial materials.

This division was not completely clear-cut. Certainly there was a major social gap between the mass of illiterate or semi-literate peasants and artisans, and the scholarly official classes. There were also, however, people of varied education working in occupations which were not highly regarded, in trade and commerce, in professional religious roles and in entertainment and teaching. Women, mostly illiterate or semi-literate, cut across all divisions.

In addition, the two interpretations of ideas overlapped, complementing and reinforcing each other. At the first level, a general blueprint of social relationships was authenticated by reference to ultimate 'truths' about the universe and its relation to society. Values associated with society were further underlined and acted out in rites and ceremonies. These activities were themselves seen as having a deeper cosmic significance too: they helped to balance the universe.

The second level further sanctified social relationships by reflecting them on a 'supernatural' plane. It also provided more details about specific connections between gods and the supernatural, and different social institutions. Together these sets of ideas covered the society. Some were concerned with the roles of the emperor and his officials, the form of government and territorial administration. Some were concerned with families and other kin-groups which had a high degree of political and economic control over their members, and to all other forms of association such as guilds, societies and even groups of friends. It is difficult to think of a corner into which these sets of ideas did not reach.

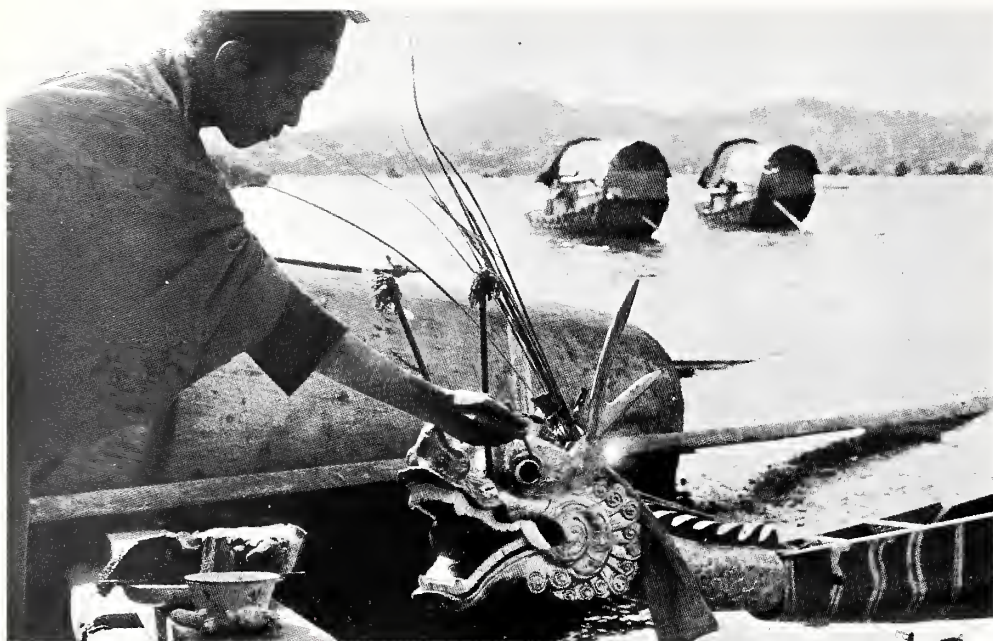
Because they explained everything to do with society, these ideas were even drawn upon by non-approved groups including bandits and rebellious organizations.

Yin and Yang

At the higher level, the blueprint for social relations in the traditional Chinese system was provided by a group of ideas which has been loosely and popularly termed 'Confucianism', from its connection with the teachings of Kung Fu-tze (550-480 BC). There have been many different interpretations of its precise nature. Some writers have stressed its concern with the things of this world and with ethics. Others, seeking to align it with the 'higher religions', have stressed the semi-personal nature of its concept of heaven. There has been much controversy among scholars over definitions and functions but in outline the theory is as follows.

Originally, there was a single cosmic cell containing 'ether' (*Ch'i*) which was made to pulsate by a creative force known as *Tao*. Tension set up by this activity eventually rent the cell into opposite and complementary halves; twin ethers which encompassed the universe and which are known as *Yin* and *Yang*. The Yin ether is of the earth, dark, female, heavy; while that of Yang is of heaven, bright, male, light. The continuous operation of *Tao*, which is a sort of natural law, causes these entities to alternate, and by this process five 'elements' are produced: water, fire, wood, metal, and earth. By various combinations of these elements, the multitude of things in this world comes into existence (see also ACUPUNCTURE).

A 19th century Chinese screen painting of the learned god of war, Kuan Ti (seated). Being a god of heaven, as opposed to a demon, he was expected to prevent rather than encourage warfare



Camera Press London



Above left A new dragon boat is blessed by a Taoist priest, who brings it offerings of roast pork and vegetables. Later the boat will take part in races designed to bring rain for the spring rice planting *Above* Portrait of the powerful Empress Tzu-Hsi at her funeral in 1908. According to Chinese religious belief the earthly ruler had a counterpart in heaven, known as the Jade or Pearly Emperor *Left* Malevolent spirits were thought to be haunting the small island of Cheung Chau near Hong Kong, after the discovery there some years ago of human remains. To placate the spirits the islanders hold an annual Bun festival, at which they say prayers and light joss sticks. They also parade through the streets (*below left*), balancing their children in the air (*below*). The spirits are presented with 60ft high mountains of buns



Camera Press London



Camera Press London



Camera Press London

The Wisdom of Confucius

From the Analects, a collection of sayings attributed to Confucius (translated by Lin Yutang).

Confucius said, 'I am going to remain quiet!' Tsekung remarked, 'If you remain quiet, how can we ever learn anything to teach to the others?' And Confucius said, 'Does Heaven talk? The four seasons go their way in succession and the different things are produced. Does Heaven talk?'

Confucius said, 'It is man that makes truth great, and not truth that makes man great.'

Confucius said, 'The superior man understands what is right; the inferior man understands what will sell.'

Baron Wen Chi said he always thought three times before he acted. When Confucius heard this, he remarked, 'To think twice is quite enough.'

Confucius said, 'You can kill the general of an army, but you cannot kill the ambition in a common man.'

Confucius said, 'Truth may not depart from human nature. If what is regarded as truth departs from human nature, it may not be regarded as truth.'

Confucius said, 'The superior man is liberal towards others' opinions, but does not completely agree with them; the inferior man agrees with others' opinions, but is not liberal toward them.'

Tsekung asked, 'Is there one single word that can serve as a principle of conduct for life?' Confucius replied, 'Perhaps the word "reciprocity" will do. Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you.'

The Yin and Yang and the elements were the basis of traditional classifications in China. Colours, parts of the empire, parts of the body, numbers and many other things, were grouped and defined in terms of them. They were thought to determine the natural forces, even the process of history and the fate of dynasties. By their continuous motion all things are formed. Death and decay is the process by which they separate into their original cosmic components. Some liken it all to the action of a gigantic pair of bellows, continually sucking in cosmic materials out of heaven and earth, forming them briefly into things as they are now, and then letting them out again to return to nothingness.

If some of this sounds obscure, the Taoist would say it is inevitable. The very adjectives used for Yin, Yang and the elements are attempts to describe the indescribable. The Taoist's task was to achieve an inward appreciation of his own nature, which is the nature of all things, for all things are governed by a single Tao. Only then could he work in true harmony with the universe.

The Harmony of Ritual

For the Confucian, however, the nature of Tao was known. It consisted of rules of conduct, etiquette and ceremonial. It was a guide for social action. Working through society, man had the important task of adjusting heaven and earth, and preserving universal balance. Heaven was seen by the Confucian as the source of morality. Earth was amoral, and man combined something of both heaven and earth. Heaven wielded the power of reward and punishment. It was approachable for knowledge of the future only by the emperor, and it was from heaven that he obtained his mandate to rule on earth. Imperial sacrifices to heaven continued until 1911, and coronations were accompanied by sacrifices, intended as 'adjustments' of heaven and earth.

All approved forms of ritual were seen as having a harmonizing function, including the cult of Confucius which took place in temples found at all administrative centres and resembling some of the temples of the gods worshipped by ordinary people. Other important cults were dedicated to the patron of literature and to the creator of writing. All these rites helped to adjust society, and to adjust further the universal

order. Most important, however, was ancestor worship, in which the emperor venerated the ancestors of the whole society, and his subjects their own forbears.

The Worship of Ancestors

Confucianism did not uphold belief in the survival of the soul. In earlier times, however, the nobility practised ancestor worship at ancestral tablets and graves. These rites were related to the ancient belief that man has two souls, a superior or spiritual soul which will ascend into heaven and meet its ancestors if due ceremonies are performed, and a second soul which informs the body during life and the corpse after death, provided the correct sacrifices are made.

In later times, scholars saw such rites as caring for the living rather than the dead. Their function was to engender feelings of filial piety and therefore harmony in the family or clan. For this reason, only those involved in the continuation of the kin-group were venerated: married persons with sons. In clans, communal halls for housing ancestral tablets became also centres for trying disputes and entertaining officials and others with whom good relations were sought.

Buddhism provided an alternative conception of man after death: the idea of a soul surviving to expiate its sins against the world in purgatory before rebirth. Naturally the idea implicit here, that parents could do wrong, was abhorrent to the true Confucian. Generally speaking, Buddhist rites for the dead, performed for parents, were frowned upon except in special circumstances.

The models for correct social behaviour and attitudes were found also in the family, the basic unit of society. The young Chinese learnt that young must venerate old and that loyalty was a most important virtue. In large family households he also learnt, sometimes from bitter experience, that acquisitiveness, self-indulgence, dishonesty and lack of a ceremonial approach to relations (which were considered to be the sources of cosmic disharmony) could certainly cause tension in the group.

The values acquired in the family were extended to all other areas of life, including relations with the government, business and other forms of organization. Many

institutions copied the kinship pattern for organizing themselves. Masters were like fathers to their apprentices, teachers similarly so to their pupils, and the emperor likewise to his subjects. Even religious groups, particularly the monastic orders, were organized according to 'pseudo-kinship principles into 'families' and 'clans'.

Balance, it was considered, could be preserved only if one acted with correct feelings. To adjust society, one had first to adjust oneself. The scholar was expected to practice self-cultivation to get an inward appreciation of the truth of the system. A non-virtuous teacher or government official could accomplish nothing good. Even epidemics, floods and other natural disasters were explained in terms of lack of virtue of the people, particularly the leaders of society.

During active social life the scholar, certainly, was expected to work entirely with Confucian assumptions. In old age, however, he was allowed to be less conventional. Some took up Buddhism as they became more concerned with physical decline and approaching death, practising meditation to assist them in their future lives. Many women were attracted to Buddhism.

Tolerance of the eccentricities of the old had a useful function. It kept those approaching senility out of social mischief, directing them within themselves rather than outside. Such self-centred activities were less tolerated for the young, although other more social forms of Buddhism and Taoism were condoned. Business men who joined societies for performing charity (part of the Mahayana tradition of which Chinese Buddhism is part) mitigated their acquisitiveness to some extent. Those forming Taoist groups to cure disease among ordinary people were performing a social service.

The Celestial Bureaucracy

The metaphysical significance of Confucianism must have been difficult for ordinary people to appreciate fully. Confucian 'results' were obtained by the use of proverbs and stories of filial piety and by a system of sermons in the rural areas; this had declined in effectiveness by the late 19th century. But a 'basis' had also to be provided. This was done by recourse to the

Man was seen as standing between gods and demons and attempting to adjust them to his social life in orderly fashion

multitude of gods and spirits of Chinese religion and the local cults it absorbed. The system was turned into an animated version of the theory of Yin and Yang.

In the ancient system, gods and spirits or demons were divided between heaven and earth respectively. Under later influence from Yin-Yang theory, gods became identified with Yang and demons with Yin. As a result of Confucian ideas the gods generally, being of heaven, were seen as the source of morality. There were a few delightfully unconventional beings, mainly of Taoist origin, however, who never quite fitted in with this scheme. Demons, being of earth, were amoral. They were greedy and impolite – like the Yin side of human nature – although like amoral people they occasionally had their uses, and sometimes destroyed each other.

In general, man was seen as standing between gods and demons and attempting to adjust to them, as the scholar adjusted the Yin and Yang elements to run his social life in orderly fashion. If he showed greed and other Yin qualities, he might attract the attention of demons, and the disfavour of the gods. If he was virtuous and moral, the gods brought him the benefits of the good life.

Gods were of different kinds. Some were personified forces of Nature, while others were deified sages, buddhas and bodhisattvas, or saviours of mankind, taken from the more supernatural levels of Taoism and Buddhism. But many were former members of society: a human being contained during life both Yin and Yang or god and demon, both elements surviving as souls. It was believed that a powerful Yang soul, that of a virtuous or powerful person, might become a god; while the Yin soul of a person dying tragically and unexpectedly might be unprepared, and hence resentful, thus becoming a powerful demon. An ingenious and rather sinister 'takeover' of the pantheon was gradually effected by the State. It took all the good, public-minded gods it could find, added to them by deifying people of noted virtue, and then placed them all in a gigantic celestial bureaucracy. This was an organization paralleling that of the worldly order but going much farther. It stretched into every institution of mankind, into areas beyond the reach of mortal officials.

Significantly, this hierarchy was not only set up but also controlled by the human bureaucracy. The head of the celestial government was the Jade or Pearly Emperor, the counterpart, of course, of the real emperor of China. Under him were boards of administration for controlling the forces of time and of Nature. There was a Ministry of Justice, comprising numerous city gods and presided over by a city god-in-chief. These gods were the counterparts of mortal officials in charge of provinces and districts of China, and individually they were based on temples in the major cities of their territories.

The origin of the city gods is said to date to the time of the Emperor Yao (2357- 2255 BC) when a spirit was thought to live in the city moat and wall. They guarded their territories from spiritual enemies and influences. Ordinary people were encouraged to help in their selection and, theoretically at least, they were appointed for a limited term and could be transferred from place to place. Beneath them were the earth gods, who were also of great antiquity and looked after the smaller community, such as a village or section of a village. Under them again were a multitude of anonymous officials known as 'honourable men' who acted as runners to the gods.

Gods of specific institutions sometimes shared temples with the community gods. The kitchen god was worshipped in all households. There was a goddess of the bedhead in charge of married couples and their children (who usually shared a bed) and there was often a goddess of child-rearing who was a former midwife and powerful spirit-medium. There were various patrons of agriculture, and the crafts and trades had their gods too. Jewellers had a Minister of Works, who achieved fame by making an ornament to conceal a disfigurement of an emperor's consort. Carpenters and other skilled workers had a craftsman god, said to have once made a wooden kite on which he rode. Even rogues and bandits had their patrons. This may have created 'honour among thieves' but it was largely a case of the system turned against itself.

Some gods had dual, even triple roles, which added to the complexity and size of the pantheon. The kitchen god, for instance, was also the patron of profes-

sional cooks. The Chinese goddess of mercy is thought to have been an ancient local goddess before the advent of Buddhism, in which her role was to help in the salvation of Buddhist souls. But she is also represented with a baby on her arm and in this form she helped people who desired to have children.

A 3rd century hero, seen as the embodiment of bravery, loyalty and righteousness, was known under seven names and was the patron of pawn-shops, all kinds of friendly societies and sworn brotherhoods; in Hong Kong he even became patron of the police. He was also a soldier god of wealth and, under another name, god of war. Some civic gods had a role in controlling man after death as well. The earth gods cared for graves. The city gods controlled souls in their districts and had some influence on the fate of Buddhist souls in purgatory.

Man's Right to Punish the Gods

It is difficult to assess precisely the attitude of the officials to all these gods. Certainly they were expected to venerate their celestial counterparts and consult them on community matters. As the *Book of Rites*, one of the classics of the Confucian canon, points out: 'when the scholar shows respect, the people will believe'. Folk stories show that ordinary people, at least, believed that officials could meet with supernatural punishment for lack of respect. On the other hand officials had the right to punish gods of a rank below their own for failing in civic duties: to bring rain or cure an epidemic for example. Images might be thrashed, gods demoted and ceremonies denied them. This perhaps provided a warning to mortal officials to perform their tasks efficiently. And there were also folk stories aiming to put gods in their place, which was always below that of the Chinese emperor.

Although the state religion of China was remarkably successful in meeting the needs of most Chinese, some rebels and eccentrics formed secret religious societies which worked for the overthrow of the established order. A priest of the Triad Society kneels before an altar in the Society's lodge. The writing above the altar calls upon members to be loyal and upright and to burn joss sticks regularly. This society was formerly outlawed because it sought the overthrow of a foreign dynasty

漢漢漢漢

有忠心方可入

英雄

正除

萬雲龍
陳近南
謝邦恒
吳延貴

三軍司令

松

木立
木楊城
斗世

無義氣切勿

素

天生天養天賜福
萬
祖遼宗公和淌塔
碑
萬子萬孫萬年長

慈含丹牡紅

東正除

龍爭珠

月丹牡白





Left The King of the Seventh Hell, surrounded by obsequious attendants, looks on while hideous dogs and demons drive condemned souls into the river. The Seventh Hell was reserved for those guilty of cannibalism and desecrating graves. Right Painting of four Kings of Hell. In popular Chinese belief there are many different hells, each ruled by a Yama or King, and each equipped to punish those who have committed specific crimes during life.

One charming story explains why the earth god is always placed on or near the ground. It appears that the emperor T'ai Tsu, who lived in the 14th century, once visited an inn on his travels and found all the tables taken except an altar table for the earth god. 'Give me your place,' he said placing the image on the ground, and proceeded to order his dinner. After the emperor had gone the inn-keeper replaced the image but that night the god appeared to him in a dream. He told him to put him back on the ground, as he did not dare to contravene the emperor's order. And so it was from that day.

For ordinary men it would appear there was no escaping the god-officials in this life or the next and many gods were themselves former officials of the mortal world. Indeed once a year all gods reported to the Jade Emperor on the conduct of the people in the community or institution under their control.

It was wisely recognized that some freedom, and some control of the system also, must be allowed to the common folk. It was assumed, for example, that the ordinary man, closer to the margin of subsistence than the average scholar, might find it difficult to follow the tenets of Confucianism in all circumstances. Certain gods were tolerated who sanctioned less approved aims. Gods of wealth were worshipped by ordinary people and also had an important role in business – shop owners gave annual feasts to wealth gods to which employees were invited. Some wealth gods also concerned themselves with questions of financial morality. They were deified men who had been generous with charitable donations. The jolly gods of Taoism provided entertaining if not always edifying stories, which were condoned.

It was also realized that those in desperate straits might do things which made them more vulnerable to celestial disfavour, and more easy prey for demons. Various rites for appeasing gods, obtaining their aid and defeating demons were thus tolerated, although they sometimes involved activities and words lacking in the decorum so prized by Confucians. As in life, one gave money and other gifts for favours. Paper mock 'money' in various denominations, 'gold' and 'silver' 'ingots', and paper 'clothes' were important items of paraphernalia for many rites. They were also cheaper than the real thing used in relation to mortal officials. Theoretically, etiquette forbade that common folk approach high gods direct, in the same way that it forbade direct approach to mortal officials. It was correct to go through the mediation of honourable men, or lesser gods, or to use the



Michael Holford

services of a type of noncelibate Taoist priest whose major role, in the later period at least, was to serve this religion.

Since this kind of priest took the status of a god on initiation, and worked to gain similar powers, he could approach gods direct, and was believed to be able to defeat demons himself. Besides performing rites on behalf of those in need, he drew up 'petitions' or constructed 'edicts', 'tablets', and 'injunctions' on behalf of the gods, using yellow-faced paper and vermilion ink in imitation of bureaucratic documents. These were used by people acting on their own. Women were the main private performers, on behalf of both themselves and the members of their households. They also tended the household images daily, together with the ancestral tablets which were usually kept on the same altarshelf.

The underworld, like the world of the gods, was thought capable of being manipulated in similar fashion to the world of men. Bribes of mock money were paid to judges at funeral performances, which were often conducted by Taoist as well as Buddhist priests; they are still carried out with great histrionics in Singapore. Exit permits were burnt for quick passage through the underworld by filial sons on behalf of their parents, and also for other members of the household.

The State managed the supernatural system with remarkable success, allowing as it did for a certain amount of unorthodox conception and practice among the ordinary people. Those who did not fit fully into

society and could not come firmly under the influence of the ideological system, the unattached and the unemployable, were often encouraged to take up some form of monasticism. Professional Buddhism was an approved occupation for elderly widows.

Secret Societies

But there were also those who were discontented with the arrangements, or dissatisfied with their own place, or that of certain men occupying official positions, in society. They sometimes joined religious groups which confirmed their attitudes and offered solutions. A number of these were messianic sects inspired by faith in the coming of a saviour. They combined Chinese notions of the Yin and Yang, and a predetermined universe, with elements from sources which included Buddhism, Taoism, even Christianity and Islam (which has existed in China for 13 centuries). They preached a millennium, a time when perfect government would be established and ruled over by an incarnate divine. Meitreyia, the 'Buddha-to-come', was usually cast in this role.

Such groups recruited frustrated scholars as well as ordinary folk, and many had both sophisticated and unsophisticated levels for understanding their ideas. There were also secret societies, such as the Triad Society, which did not have their own independent ideologies but used elements from various sources and directed them not so much towards a millennium as towards the overthrow of the foreign Ch'ing dynasty and

restoration of the Chinese Ming. Groups of this sort were not tolerated of course, and were often severely suppressed.

Revolutionary China

With religion so intertwined with the social system, major social change could not be effected in China without a corresponding change in accepted beliefs and practices. A new and comprehensive ideology was found in Chinese Communism – although, curiously, traditional Chinese medicine, which is based on Yin-Yang theory, was still positively encouraged in the 'new' China. In some ways the new system resembled the old, especially in its Maoist form. There are striking parallels between modern and traditional methods of instilling the social ethic, for example through self-cultivation by reading orthodox books and seeking strength from an inward appreciation of their teachings. But the comparison must not be pressed too far. There is much in modern China that is very different from the past.

Information about the precise state of beliefs and customs connected with the former gods in today's China is not easy to come by. Chinese Communism inevitably has been hostile to the traditional Chinese religions and to Islam and Christianity, but attempts to strip the supernatural sanctions from traditional institutions were made many years before the Communists came to power.

Already in the 18th and 19th centuries, some Confucian scholars had suggested

The Ancestors Know Better

China under the Shang dynasty, c1300 BC.

In the family temples, of the imperial family as well as of the nobles, offerings of food and wine must regularly be made to each of the many ancestors, even when no especial favours are required. (When they are, the offerings will be supplemented by sacrifices of animals or of slaves.) The presentation to one of the ancestors of a vessel for food or wine or water is a fitting way of commemorating any auspicious event, a successful hunt or battle, or a mark of imperial favour, a grant of land or of title. After all, the ancestors' influence determines the course of

events for their descendants, and they deserve a reward for their efforts. The name of the ancestor thus honoured will often be inscribed on the vessel in the pictographic script that . . . has come into use during the reign of this enlightened dynasty. The priests are the interpreters between the dead and the living. Although they accompany the emperor on his travels in order to give him day-to-day advice from the ancestors, it is best to pose important questions within the ancestor temple in the city, where one is most likely to find the ancestors at home. Questions are submitted in writing, carved on shoulder blades of cattle or on tortoise shells, and the ancestors answer them, with a plain 'Yes' or 'No',

by guiding the direction of the crack produced when the priest applies a red-hot bronze point to the back of the bone. It is a simple method, and the same bone or shell can be used over and over again. So the ancestors are asked about everything: tomorrow's weather and the best place to camp for the night, as well as the prospects for the harvest...The answers are not infallible, for after all even ancestors are not all-powerful. But on the whole they know better than their living descendants, and sometimes the priest will triumphantly inscribe on the bone after the event the tally of the day's hunt or the laconic remark that 'it really didn't rain'.

Geoffrey Bibby *Four Thousand Years Ago*



Shou-Lao, the god of long-life, holding a peach, a symbol of longevity and immortality, because it was thought that the peaches in the celestial orchard ripened once every 3000 years

that the system would have to change to accommodate needed social reforms. The pressure for change eventually proved irresistible. In 1905 the traditional Confucian examination system was abolished. This threw the gates to a successful career so wide open that, in a remarkable development, the schools began accepting girls.

By the time the last of the Manchu emperors abdicated in 1912, the Confucian system had been severely undermined. The triumphant National People's Party (Kuomintang) was led by Sun Yat-Sen, a Protestant Christian. Determined on westernization, the new regime was fiercely hostile to Confucianism and all the ways of the old China, and Confucian temples were destroyed in campaigns backed by the authorities. From the 1920s to the 1940s China was torn by civil war and the Japanese occupied parts of the country. Buddhism and Taoism revived and the number of Christians increased, despite attacks on them by the Communists.

The Kuomintang under Chiang Kai-Shek attempted to revive Confucianism in its own support, appealing to the virtues of loyalty, discipline and obedience to authority. After the Communists triumphed, they too tried to blend this aspect of the Confucian tradition with Marxism-Leninism as a support to the regime, while foreign missionaries were imprisoned or expelled. In the 1970s, however, came a fierce campaign against Confucius and the conservative values that he represented.

Traditional Chinese religion's strongholds today are overseas, in Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, where there are many temples and cults. Even here, the background of social and political institutions is very different from that of traditional China. The religion of overseas Chinese is traditional, but it does not have the same relevance to society that it once did in the homeland.

MARJORIE TOPLEY*

FURTHER READING; A.F.Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford U. Press, 1959); C.K.Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society* (University of California Press, 1961).

Michael Holford

CHINESE ASTROLOGY

SO-CALLED CHINESE astrology is, properly speaking, not astrology at all in the western, Arabic and Indian sense of the term. For it is based neither on the movement of the sun, moon and planets through the zodiac, nor on their spatial relationships (aspects) to one another.

Instead it is concerned with the supposed nature of particular years and the characters of individuals born in those same years, on the basis of a sixty-year calendrical cycle which permutes twelve animal (real or mythical) forms with the positive (+) and negative (-) aspects of the five 'elements' (metal, water, wood, fire, and earth) of Taoist cosmology.

These elements must not be regarded as, or confused with, elements in the physical sense. Rather they are particular qualities which are partially displayed by their material analogues. Thus the 'water element' is the quintessence of such qualities as changeability, flux, fluidity, the ability to reflect etc, which we normally associate with water in the daily sense of that word.

The Twelve Animal Forms

The animal forms are: the Rat, the Ox, the Tiger, the Rabbit, the Dragon, the Snake, the Horse, the Sheep, the Monkey, the Cockerel (or Rooster), the Dog and the Pig.

How these animal forms are permuted with the elements is exemplified in the following table for the years 1960-1979:

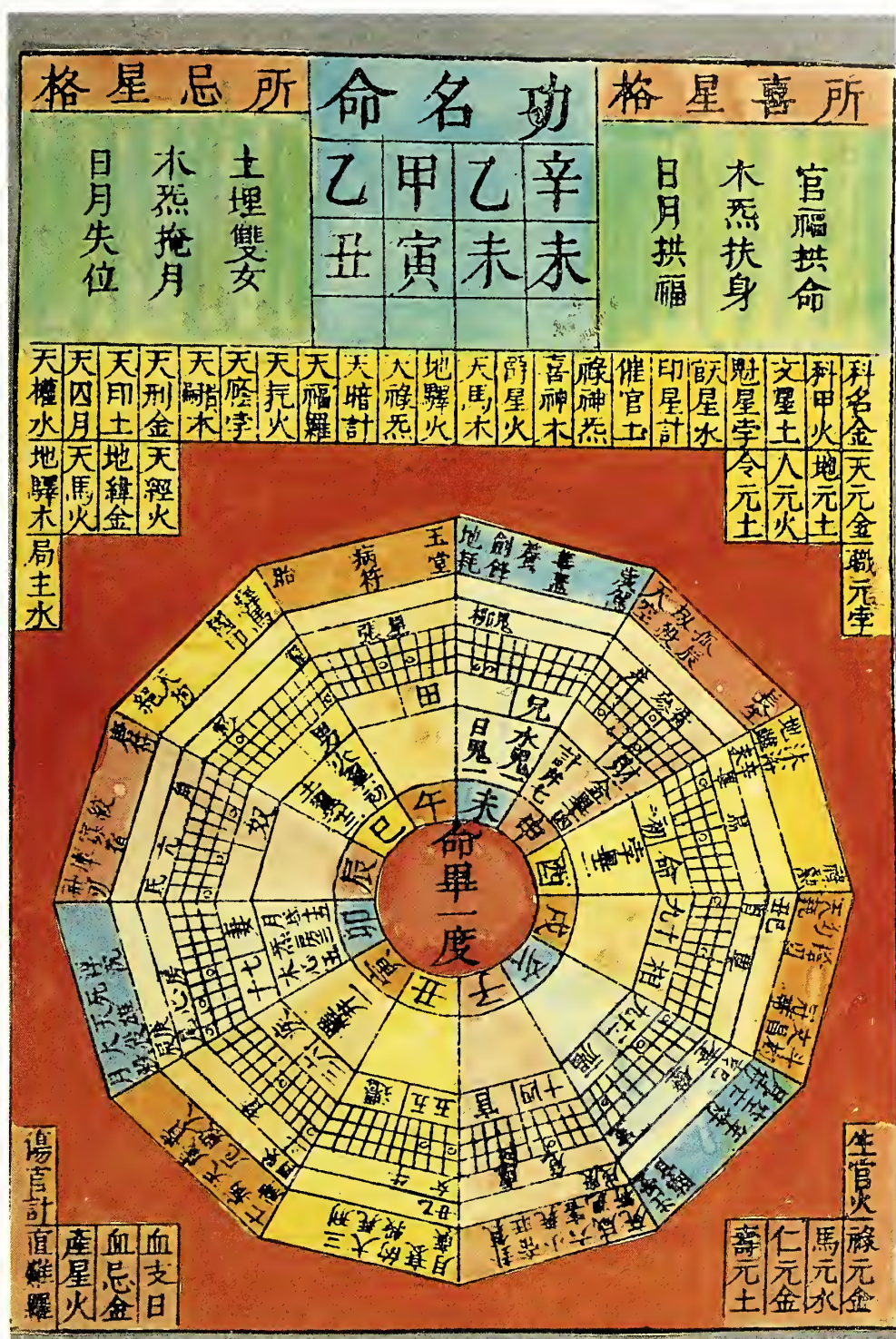
1960 + Metal Rat	1970 + Metal Dog
1961 - Metal Ox	1971 - Metal Pig
1962 + Water Tiger	1972 + Water Rat
1963 - Water Rabbit	1973 - Water Ox
1964 + Wood Dragon	1974 + Wood Tiger
1965 - Wood Snake	1975 - Wood Rabbit
1966 + Fire Horse	1976 + Fire Dragon
1967 - Fire Sheep	1977 - Fire Snake
1968 + Earth Monkey	1978 + Earth Horse
1969 - Earth Cockerel	1979 - Earth Sheep

The sequence continues, so that it is not difficult to calculate that 1980 was the year of the Positive Metal Monkey and 1981 the year of the Negative Metal Cockerel. And so it goes on until 2020, when a new sixty-year calendar cycle begins and it is once again the year of the Positive Metal Rat, just as it was in 1960.

Moveable Feasts

The years as shown in the table above are only approximations to the year period covered in Chinese astrology. For example, in the table the year of the Positive Metal Rat is shown as 1960, but it actually began on 28 January 1960 and ended on 14 February 1961: the 'year' of the Positive Metal Rat was eighteen days longer than the year of the standard western calendar, in terms of which the Chinese New Year can fall on no less than 31 different dates.

This is sometimes found confusing by Westerners who are, of course, used to the date of the New Year being a fixed one.



Although a Chinese horoscope may bear a superficial resemblance to the planetary horoscope drawn by a western, Arabic or Indian astrologer, it is in fact based upon a complex cycle of twelve animal years, elements and positive or negative qualities, within which each month, day and hour will have its own particular attributes: horoscope drawn for a day in the western year 1390 AD

New Year's Day is always 1 January - and has been so for centuries.

In the Chinese system of chronology the situation has been, and is, very different. The year is measured in two different ways. One is lunar, that is, calculated by reference to the moon and its phases. The other is solar, computed by reference to the tilting of

the earth's axis. Both the lunar and solar calendars have their own New Year's Days, which rarely coincide with one another.

Even more strange - to an occidental - is the fact that the New Year of both calendars is a moveable feast, its date altering from one New Year to another. The exact date of the solar New Year falls somewhere between 4 and 20 February. The lunar New Year, however, falls on the day of the second new moon after the winter solstice. This means that the Chinese lunar New Year can fall on any date between 21 January and 20 February and that the two Chinese New Year's Days can only coincide when there is a New Moon between 4 and 20 February - and even then they will in practice coincide only rarely.

Positive and Negative

From the table above it is apparent that six of the animal forms – Rat, Tiger, Dragon, Horse, Monkey and Dog – are always positive, no matter to what element they are attributed, and the other six are always negative. This does not mean that practitioners of Chinese astrology believe or teach that any person born in a year pertaining to one of the six negative forms is innately inferior to one born in a positive year.

What is believed is that those born in a positive year will be happier in life and more successful in their chosen careers if they pursue an active, thrusting attitude towards both the public and the private sides of life. In other words, such people are well advised to try to make their own destinies – to influence the outside world more than they are influenced by it.

On the other hand, it is believed that those born in a negative year should avoid approaching external reality, whether things, people, institutions, or even ideas, in

a combative spirit – they will be happier and more prosperous if they are prepared to be influenced by outside forces, to go, so to speak, with the tide.

Animals and Elements

The general characteristics of those born in the various years associated with the twelve animal forms are as follows:

Those born in years of the Rat are likeable, gregarious, hard working, ambitious and thrifty.

Those born in years of the Ox are loyal, patient, conventional, courageous and tend towards stolidity.

Those born in years of the Tiger are lucky, dynamic, prepared to take risks, unpredictable, tending to enjoy life to the full.

Those born in years of the Rabbit are sensitive, artistic, quietly intellectual, fortunate and generous.

Those born in years of the Dragon are energetic, strong, passionate, bold and tending to become prosperous.

Those born in years of the Snake are mysterious, wise, strongly sexed, self-reliant and extremely tenacious.

Those born in years of the Horse are popular with almost everybody, adventurous, cheerful, sociable and tending to changeability.

Those born in years of the Sheep are kind, sensitive, artistic, very emotional and subject to gloom.

Those born in years of the Monkey are charming, clever, resourceful, flexible and have a tendency to be deceptive.

Those born in years of the Cockerel (Rooster) are critical both of institutions and of other people, amusing, tactless, and efficient, and sometimes have a tendency to eccentricity.

Those born in years of the Dog are intelligent, open minded with a love for fairness and justice, capable of unusual objectivity, and sometimes tending to be suspicious of the motives of others.

Those born in years of the Pig are pleasure-seeking, gifted with ability to make themselves popular, honest, considerate towards others and physically passionate.

Complexities of Interaction

Such a brief delineation of animal form characteristics would be looked upon by most serious students of Chinese astrology as useful to a degree, but easily capable of misinterpretation by the unwary.

This is because the character of almost no individual is adequately summed up in the qualities of only one animal form. This view is analogous to that held by serious students of western astrology in relation to the 'sun sign astrology' featured in popular newspaper and magazine columns – that it is not to be taken as being of any real value because only very rarely is any one person a 'pure Capricornian' or a 'pure Piscean'. The horoscope of an individual normally displays a complexity of planetary aspects and zodiacal influences which requires skilled interpretation.

Similar complexities are to be found in Chinese astrology. Firstly, the animal form nature of the birth year is modified by the elemental attribution; whether, for instance, a year is that of the Fire or the Water Pig.

Secondly and thirdly, the supposed characteristics of the elemental animal of the year of birth are thought to be modified by the animal forms attributed to the time and month of birth, for each day and each year is divided into twelve sections attributed to one or other of the animal forms.

As an example of the consequences arising from this, consider a woman born at 10 pm on 12 August 1970, the year of the Metal Dog. Her basic Metal Dog characteristics would supposedly be greatly modified by the fact that she was born in a month ruled by the Monkey and at a time attributed to the Pig, and as a result her character would be expected to display a blend of Dog, Monkey and Pig influences.

FRANCIS KING

The twelve animal forms of Chinese astrology in a Nepalese tanka





CHRISTIANITY

'Other religions teach that men have become gods: Christianity that God entered into flesh and became man.' In this article the history of one of the great religions of the world is outlined

CHRISTIANITY TAKES ITS NAME from its founder, Jesus Christ. Christ is not a name but an adjective meaning 'the anointed one' and derived from the Greek *Christos* which is itself a translation of the Hebrew *Messiah*, the one chosen and anointed by God. Jesus is a Hebrew name, Jesus was a Jew, and the designation Jesus Christ points to two cardinal facts about the rise of Christianity. It sprang from Judaism, and in the early centuries it had its widest dissemination in the Hellenistic world, the Mediterranean area where Greek cultural influence was strong.

Many of the central concepts of Judaism were incorporated into Christianity: as Jesus said, he had come not to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfil. The Old Testament, the name given by Christians to the Jewish scriptures, asserts the oneness of God: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one god.' An intransigent monotheism has been both the glory and the tragedy of Israel. In the ancient world this insistence set the Jews apart from their neighbours even in a political sense, as the gods of the various peoples were expected to recognize each other. In particular, Israel came into conflict with rulers who claimed to be gods themselves. This claim was made by Alexander and his successors, by the Egyptian pharaohs and by the emperors of Rome, and this claim the Jews resolutely rejected. They were the only people in antiquity who refused to place a pinch of incense on the altars of the emperors, and the only people who were tacitly granted exemption from this universal demand.

The Jewish Background

There are religions of Nature, religions of contemplation and religions of history, and Judaism was centred in history. Religions of Nature see the divine in the recurrence of the seasons, and particularly in the processes of fertility. Their rites call for the sacrifice of infants to win the favour of the god and to stimulate the fertility of the earth; sometimes also for the emasculation of men and the perpetual virginity of

women or, in reverse, for sacred prostitution. Ancient Israel met such practices in Canaan and sought ruthlessly to stamp them out.

Religions of contemplation seek the divine by turning within, until meditation is consummated in ecstatic union with the Ultimate. Judaism knew of dreams and visions but not the rapture of the mystic who loses his identity in the abyss of the godhead.

Religions of history see the divine rather in events, in the mighty acts of God as he raises up and casts down. Frequently they look forward to a great coming event, a cataclysm which will terminate the present world order and introduce a new and blessed era. For the Jews the new era was to be the restoration of Paradise, to be inaugurated by an inspired leader, the Messiah.

If the coming day of the Lord was to be light and not darkness, Israel must do God's will. Some believed that this consisted in the performance of the rites of the Temple. But when the Temple was no longer accessible, as a result of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, in the 6th century BC, the law (called the Torah) with all its requirements of circumcision, kosher food, sabbath observance and the like, became the focus of Jewish piety. The prophets, however, deprecated formalism of this sort and thundered that God is not pleased with the blood of rams but rather when justice rolls down like waters and righteousness as a mighty stream.

By the time of Jesus the Jews, who had been an oppressed people for seven centuries, were under the yoke of Rome. Many of the peoples of the Empire rejoiced that Rome had given them security through the establishment of a universal peace but the Jews were resentful. The flower of their youth had been squandered in Rome's earlier civil wars and the Roman belief in the divinity of the emperor was contrary to Jewish belief in the sole rule of God.

There were three parties among the Jews. The Sadducees were willing to collaborate with the occupying power, the Zealots fomented rebellion, and the Pharisees would neither fraternize nor rebel but kept the law and waited for vindication at the hands of God. Those who committed themselves to political passivity in this way were all the more ready to dream of an intervention from

Previous page Some historians have maintained that the only thing we know for certain about Jesus is that he was crucified, though such a degree of scepticism is now out of fashion, and the essential picture given of his life in the New Testament is generally accepted as reliable. God looks down from heaven, while St John supports the Virgin Mary who mourns over the dead Jesus: from the Rowan Book of Hours, in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris
Right St Paul's missionary journeys made Asia Minor the most heavily Christianized area in the early centuries after the death of Jesus: cave dwellings in the Cappadocian province of Turkey, used by several generations of early Christians

heaven. A deliverer would come, whether he was 'the righteous one' of the Dead Sea Scrolls, a Messiah on earth, or the Son of Man appearing on the clouds of heaven.

Did Jesus Exist?

Into this society was born Jesus the Galilean, a loyal Jew who observed the feasts by going up to Jerusalem. How much do we know about him?

There are no writings from his pen. The gospels which tell of his life and teachings were not composed until some 30 or more years after his death (commonly dated to the year 33 AD) and some portions of the Christian scriptures, called the New Testament, may date from as late as the end of the 1st century or even the beginning of the 2nd. Can we rely on the picture which they draw?

Some historians have questioned even the very existence of Jesus, despite the difficulty in that case of explaining the rise of the Christian religion. Marxists have maintained that Jesus was a myth of the proletariat, though there was no proletariat in the modern sense in that day. Some have suggested that Jesus was a Nature myth, a personification of the dying and rising of the seasons, for he rose from the dead in the spring. But the early Christians clearly did not see him in this light, and in fact they took care not to commemorate the Resurrection on the day of the spring equinox, because that was the day on which the Nature god Attis arose after the death of winter.

Other historians have said that Jesus did indeed exist but of one fact only can we be



Camera Press London

quite sure, that he was crucified. There are variants in the accounts of all the other events of his life and, it is argued, the early Christians selected for the record only what met their own needs and hopes.

Such scepticism has diminished of late, for we are unable to account for the ways in which the early Christians differed from their Jewish forbears unless it is accepted that Jesus instituted changes. The essential picture in the New Testament is reliable, the more evidently because the authors recorded unpalatable sayings of Jesus. For example, the Church was confronted by a group stemming from John the Baptist, giving them good reason to disparage John. Yet they recorded Jesus's words, 'There is none greater born of woman than John.'

The cross itself was also a source of offence. Why revere a criminal executed by the most shameful of all deaths? Some in the early Church tried to eliminate the dilemma by denying that Jesus had a real body at all. He merely looked as if he did and on the cross he cried out 'as if in pain'. But the main body of the early Church would have none of this. Their creed asserted that 'he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.'

If Jesus was a Jew, loyal to the tradition of his people, and if he was not a rebel against Rome, why was he crucified? The answer is that he alienated all parties: the Sadducees because he scorned them for collaborating with the Romans; the Zealots because he would not rebel; the Pharisees

because he differed from them as to what was meant by fulfilling the law. He held that the Great Commandment was to love God and your neighbour, rather than to refrain from certain foods, or to observe the Sabbath to the neglect of human obligations. In particular, Jesus consorted with outcasts, prostitutes and tax-gatherers. Assuring them of God's forgiveness, he even undertook to forgive their sins himself. He seemed, then, to be guilty of blasphemy, by usurping the role of God. Jesus certainly spoke of God as his Father, and he appears to have thought of himself as the Messiah who would redeem Israel, not by arms but by suffering.

Jesus was conscious of standing at the pinnacle of history, about to usher in the





Christians of all denominations believe that, in Jesus, God became man, died in agony on the cross and rose from the dead, to bring all men the possibility of eternal life and happiness with God. Easter is a period of sorrow at Christ's death, repentance for human sinfulness and joy at Christ's resurrection. *Far left* Procession of the Penitents of Perpignan, in France, carrying the image of Christ crucified. The custom of doing public penance on Good Friday is a common one in many parts of the world *Left* Easter procession in Malta with the figure of Christ carrying the cross which he bore for every man *Above* The American evangelist Billy Graham, whose massive campaigns to bring the message of Christ to the people are, in their different way, as dramatically moving as the older processions and images

new Paradise of God. His challenge to the priests at Jerusalem, when he defied their authority by casting out of the Temple those who changed foreign coins into Temple currency, brought the wrath of the hierarchy upon him; but because he already enjoyed a popular following, the rulers of the people feared to lay hands on him. They were not empowered to put him to death without Roman consent, and the only charge which Rome would entertain was that of political insurrection.

Jesus could hardly be accused of committing an overt act of rebellion, and the charge finally made against him, and fixed to his cross in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, was that he had claimed to be the 'King of the Jews'. From the point of view of the Jews, therefore, his real offence was blasphemy, but to Pontius Pilate, the Roman official, he was guilty of inciting rebellion.

The Conquest of Death

After his crucifixion, Jesus was alleged by his disciples to have risen from the dead. Some historians feel that there were three stages in the growth of this tradition. First came visions of the risen Jesus, then the stories that his tomb had been found empty, and finally the belief that he had ascended bodily into heaven. But however the Resurrection may have been conceived or experienced, the followers of Jesus were convinced that their master was still alive.

This faith created the Church. Such a statement may seem too strong, for other religions have originated without a founder

who rose from the dead. But it is certain that the faith of the early Christians rested on the belief that Christ had conquered death and had broken the power of the demonic forces in the cosmos. He had given men a new power to surmount their own perverse propensities. Another vivid element in the early Christian faith was that Christ would soon return as the Son of Man upon the clouds of heaven, to set up a new order, whether on earth or in heaven.

Inspired with this faith, all the disciples became missionaries. Christianity had its first following among the Jews, to whom Peter was missionary, but Hellenist converts, who spoke Greek, soon became more numerous. As a result, the New Testament has come down to us not in Aramaic, the language of Jesus, but only in Greek. St Paul, the missionary to the Gentiles, was largely responsible for Christianity's development away from its origins in agrarian Palestine and into the urban Hellenistic world. His missionary journeys throughout Asia Minor made this region the most heavily Christianized until the time of the Emperor Constantine in the 4th century AD. He also travelled to Rome where, according to a strong tradition, he was martyred during Nero's persecution of the Christians in 64 AD.

Paul came nearer than any other New Testament writer to formulating a Christian theology. A Jew himself, he naturally accepted the Jewish picture of God as the Father. Jesus is not called God by Paul, but he is said to have been on an equality with

God and to have humbled himself, taking the form of a slave and becoming obedient even to the death on the cross. For this reason God 'has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord . . . ' (Philippians, chapter 2).

Paul's statement that Christ humbled himself was taken to mean that he emptied himself of his full power and glory, a view which facilitated the later claim that he was both God and man. As man he had divested himself of some of the prerogatives of deity.

In the gospel of St John there is a more precise statement of the doctrine of the Incarnation, the doctrine that God became man. In the prologue to that gospel we read that, 'In the beginning was the Word.' The English 'Word' translates the Greek *logos*, which means the rational principle, both dormant and active, in the entire universe. This was the principle in accordance with which God created the world, and this *logos* became flesh in Jesus. The Latin word for 'flesh' is *carnis*, hence becoming flesh is called 'incarnation'. Other religions teach that men have become gods: Christianity that God entered into flesh and became man.

Paul was the greatest theologian among the early Christians: the greatest leader of the churches is believed to have been Peter. The Roman church looked upon Peter and Paul as the co-founders of their church and Peter, as well as Paul, is assumed to have

Christianity stressed the gentler virtues: mercy, compassion, consideration, tenderness self-sacrifice and love, sheer love, with no consideration of recompense

suffered martyrdom under Nero. There is a tradition that Peter became the first bishop of Rome but this has not been established for certain. The bishop was at first merely the pastor of a local group of Christians. The Roman congregation soon acquired a leading position among the churches, partly because it was in the capital of the Roman Empire but even more because it was the most reliable source of the Christian tradition, since it was founded by the two martyred apostles, after whom there had been an unbroken line of succession in the bishopric.

Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love

Christian morality at that time was heroic rather than ascetic. In many respects, Christianity carried over the ethic of Judaism. But in contrast to both Judaism and paganism, Christianity stressed the gentler virtues: mercy, compassion, consideration, tenderness, self-sacrifice and love, sheer love, with no consideration of recompense.

At certain points, this early ethic was affected by the expectation that Christ would soon return. Because Paul believed that the current world order of society would only last a short time, he taught that no one should try to change his status, whether he was a slave or a free man. The early Church, therefore, sought to ameliorate the lot of the slave and Christianize the relationship of master and man, but did not call for universal emancipation.

By the same token, the married and the unmarried should remain as they were, except that marriage might be allowed to those who could not abstain from sex. This grudging concession was later given an ascetic turn and led for centuries to virginity being considered superior to marriage. The only point at which the early ethic called for a drastic change in social attitudes was with regard to war. No Christian author condoned killing in war until the time of Constantine. Various reasons were given for this pacifism, the main one being Christian love. However, some leaders of the Church allowed Christians to do military service, provided they did not kill. This was possible during the two centuries of the great Roman peace, when the army was generally engaged in what today would be police work.

Christianity seems to have emerged as a religion in its own right, recognizably distinct from Judaism, by the time of Nero's persecution in 64 AD. Once this had happened, Christians forfeited the exemption from taking part in the worship of the emperor, which was tacitly granted to the Jews. The Christians, quite as emphatically as the Jews, would give divine honour to no man. This refusal was one of the main reasons for their persecution until the time of Constantine. In addition, their rejection of all pagan gods was interpreted as atheism and the pacifism of the great majority of Christians was thought to be a danger to the state.

The First Three Centuries

During the first three centuries the Church continued to spread, especially around the shores of the Mediterranean and inland along the courses of rivers such as the Tiber, the Po and the Rhone. As Christianity expanded and the number of its adherents increased, divisions arose within the Christian body.

Reference has already been made to those who argued that Jesus did not have a real body but only the appearance of a body. The same claim was made by the Gnostics (see Gnosticism). They argued that, because the body is material and evil, Jesus could not have had a body and could not have been incarnated in flesh. Equally the material and therefore evil world could not have been created by God, but by a malevolent god or spirit, a 'demiurge'.

The Church strove valiantly to conserve belief in the humanity of Jesus and the creation of the world as good by God. The early Creed affirmed 'I believe in God the Father Almighty, the Maker of Heaven and Earth.'

A question of discipline caused a schism in the Church after the great persecution by the Emperor Decius in 250 AD. Many members of the congregations and even some bishops had been frightened into sacrificing to the Roman gods. When the persecution ceased they wanted to be restored to communion within the Church, for already great importance was attached to receiving the body and blood of Christ in the form of bread and wine; the rite that was later called the Mass. Most members of the Church agreed to readmit the lapsed

after suitable penance but splinter groups, who believed in the strict enforcement of rules, seceded.

The Conversion of Constantine

The conversion of Constantine in 312 AD marked the turning point in the status of the Church in the Roman world. One of the contestants in the struggle for the position of emperor – a struggle that had divided the Roman world – he overcame his rival in Rome at the battle of the Milvian Bridge outside the city.

Constantine was convinced that victory had been given him by the risen Christ. Although it seems strange that he should have looked for triumph in war from the Prince of Peace, there can be no question of his sincerity. He had nothing to gain politically by proclaiming his conversion; at that time only about 15% of the population in the West was Christian. In 323 AD he became ruler of the entire empire. When he became a Christian he had to give up being a god and the cult of the deified emperor came to an end.

Constantine declared the day on which Christ rose from the dead a public holiday and called it the Sun's Day – previously he had been a worshipper of the sun. Northern Europeans followed Constantine's lead with such names as Sunday and Sonntag.

Under Constantine there was not precisely a union of Church and State but there was a close affiliation. This became closer under the later emperors in the Byzantine East. Legislation was passed favouring orthodox Christianity and penalizing dissenters. The Jews suffered some restrictions, the pagans more, and the heretics most. The heretics were driven out, the pagans died out and the Jews alone survived, although they were treated as aliens in a Christian society.

The Arian Heresy

A doctrinal dispute which arose in Egypt is known as the Arian-Athanasian controversy from the names of the opposing leaders, Arius and Athanasius. The Arians said that Christ was a creature; he was the first of all creatures and he was associated with God in the creation of the world. But he did not have 'an eternal timeless generation' and 'there was when he was not'. The Athanasian party affirmed that Christ as



the Son had been eternally present with God the Father. There had been no beginning, there would be no end. He was of one being or essence or substance with God the Father. When the Holy Spirit was included in this relationship, the doctrine of the Trinity was complete.

Supporters of this doctrine insisted that it was not tritheism (belief in three gods) as their opponents claimed. Neither was it modalism (the view that God has three modes of activity). The doctrine of the Athanasian party was adopted by the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD.

It has always been difficult to find a middle ground between Christ's separation from God, as a subordinate creature, and his full identity with God. The reconciliation

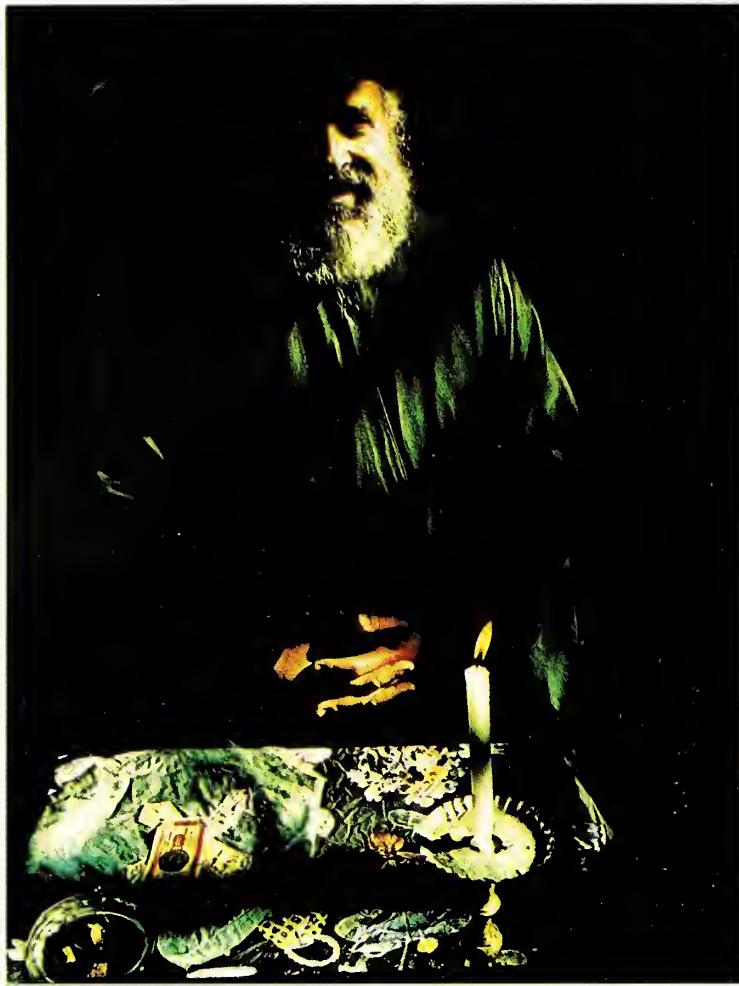
is found in the view that humanity and divinity are not incompatible. Even man can be a participant in the divine nature, and Christ participated to the full.

But if Christ was of one essence or being or substance with the Father, and if he was also human, what was the relationship of the human nature to the divine nature in him? This subject became controversial in the 5th century. The Nestorians were accused of splitting Christ into a dual personality, but denied the charge. The Monophysites (from *monos*, one and *physis*, nature) said that Christ had only one nature, the divine. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD affirmed that he had two natures, inseparably combined. A number of groups refused to accept this definition and the

When he was about 30, Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan by his cousin John the Baptist, according to the gospels; after the ceremony the Spirit of God descended on him in the form of a dove, and a voice from heaven declared 'This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased'. This illustration is from an 18th century Ethiopian manuscript in the British Museum

doctrinal difference merged with racial and linguistic divisions.

The Syrian churches divided and the Nestorian branch, driven out of the Greek empire, won a following in Persia, India and China. Another branch, the Jacobite, took the Monophysite position, as did the Armenians and the Copts in Egypt. In the



Daily Telegraph Colour Library



7th century Honorius, the bishop of Rome, tried to reconcile the opposing parties by giving his support to the view that Christ has only one will, a position called Monothelite (from *monos*, one and *thelema*, will). This doctrine was later rejected by the eastern and the western churches, but is still held by the Maronites, a sect found mainly in the Lebanon.

Yet another dispute which racked the Byzantine empire concerned the form of worship. The question was whether the images of Christ and the saints, and in particular the crucifix, should be allowed in churches. Iconoclasm, the breaking of images, started with the Emperor Leo the Isaurian. In Isauria, a district of Asia Minor, the bishops harked back to the days of the early church when there were no images — for even the crucifix did not appear until towards the end of the 4th century. Christians with Monophysite leanings who believed that Christ had only one divine nature, said that to portray the human was impossible, while to portray the divine was idolatry. The defenders of the images called them the books of the unlearned; they argued that if God became flesh in Christ, and Christ became present in bread and wine, there was no reason why the saints and Christ should not be depicted in art. Images were eventually restored, but only as paintings or bas relief. Rounded sculpture was excluded in the East but permitted in the West.

Ethically, the greatest change in Christian thought during and after the time of

The earliest disciples became missionaries, in particular Peter who was the chief missionary to the Jews, and Paul who preached mainly to the Gentiles. This tradition has been vigorously continued, giving Christianity a foothold in every corner of the globe

Left The first expansion was into the Greek-speaking world of the eastern Mediterranean, where the Greek Orthodox Church continues to flourish: an Orthodox priest in the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, built on what was believed to be the site of Christ's birth

Right Christians have been working in Africa since the 15th century: a missionary with an African Christian woman who has whitened her face, apparently to make her more acceptable to a white god

Constantine was in the Church's attitude to war. This was partly because of the martial victories of Constantine, the defender of the faith, and partly because of continuing pressure from the barbarians. Most Christians adopted a modified version of the classical theory of the just war. In the West St Augustine, at the turn of the 4th and 5th centuries, taught that the motive of the just war was love and that its objects must be the vindication of justice and the restoration of peace. Its conduct should be as humane as possible. Monks and the clergy should not fight.

After the fall of Rome in 410 AD the political unity of the Roman empire was shattered, despite a partial and temporary recovery under Justinian (c 482–565 AD).

Various Teutonic tribes established themselves within the empire, some of whom were already Christians but Arians, members of a heretical sect. Others were pagans. The conversion of both to orthodox Christianity was the work partly of the papacy, partly of the monastic orders.

Hermits in the Desert

Monasticism had developed in Egypt, especially in the time of Constantine. As the masses began to flock into the Church, the more ardent spirits withdrew to the desert. At first they were hermits who renounced the society of men, but later communities of monks were formed. From the outset celibacy was demanded of monks as it was, later, of nuns. Monasticism gradually became part of the structure of the Church. St Jerome combined monasticism and scholarship, devoting himself to the translation of the scriptures. Monks often became bishops.

Eventually, a vocational division arose. The bishops or secular clergy (from *saeculum*, the world) served the parishes, while the monks or regular clergy (from *regula*, the rule of the monasteries) engaged in contemplation and prayer, did missionary work and, later on, dispensed hospitality.

In the West the papacy, centred in Rome, became immensely powerful politically, because government had broken down and although the Byzantine emperor in the East still claimed jurisdiction over the West, he lacked the resources for dealing with the barbarians.

The Children of God

God is the God of the humble, the miserable, the oppressed and the desperate, and of those that are brought even to nothing; and his nature is to give sight to the blind, to comfort the broken-hearted, to justify sinners, to save the very desperate and damned. Now that pernicious and pestilent opinion of man's own righteousness, which will not be a sinner, unclean, miserable and damnable, but righteous and holy, suffereth not God to come to his own natural and proper work . . . But here lieth the difficulty, that when a man is terrified and cast down, he is so little able to raise himself up again and say, 'Now I am bruised and afflicted

enough; now is the time of grace; now is the time to hear Christ.' The foolishness of man's heart is so great that then he rather seeketh to himself more laws to satisfy his conscience. 'If I live,' saith he, 'I will amend my life: I will do this, I will do that.' But here, except thou do the quite contrary, except thou send Moses away with his law, and in these terrors and this anguish lay hold upon Christ who died for thy sins, look for no salvation. Thy cowl, thy shaven crown, thy chastity, thy obedience, thy poverty, thy works, thy merits, what shall all these do, what shall the law of Moses avail? If I, wretched and damnable sinner, through works or

merits could have loved the Son of God, and so come to him, what needed he to deliver himself for me? If I, being a wretch and damned sinner, could be redeemed by any other price, what needed the Son of God to be given? But because there was no other price, therefore he delivered neither sheep, ox, gold nor silver, but even God himself, entirely and wholly 'for me'. . . Now, therefore, I take comfort and apply this to *myself*. And this manner of applying is the very true force and power of faith. For he died *not* to justify the righteous, but the unrighteous, and to make *them* the children of God.

Martin Luther *Commentary on Galatians*

In the mid-8th century the kingdom of the Franks, to the north, recognized the bishop of Rome as the civil ruler of a strip of Italy running from Rome over the Apennines to Ravenna. Meanwhile the Benedictine monks, followed later by other orders, crossed the Alps and took over unused land. There they created self-sustaining communities and became centres from which the task of converting and educating the pagans was carried out.

The expansion of Christianity and the Church's involvement in society brought changes and corruptions. A religion cannot expand without adapting itself to the language and customs of its converts, and while this process may win converts it may at the same time pervert the religion. The pacifism of early Christianity disappeared completely in the Middle Ages, with many kingdoms, all professing Christianity, fighting between themselves. The saints were militarized. St Peter was honoured not because he had acknowledged Christ, but because he had cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. St George, St Andrew, St David and St Michael assumed the roles of the war gods of antiquity.

The Truce of God

Wealth proved corrupting. A monk described the history of western monasticism in this sequence: piety produces industry, industry creates wealth, wealth destroys piety, piety in its fall dissipates wealth. Each of the great monastic orders enjoyed at least two centuries of vitality. Enfeeblement followed, and new orders arose in an effort to recover the original spirit. The papacy, too, experienced periods of efflorescence and of decay.

The 11th century was marked by a great movement of reform, led by men from the north who had little feeling for the Mediterranean world, and who desired to cleanse the monasteries, purify the Church and give direction to society. The Western (Roman) and the Eastern (Byzantine) Churches finally separated in 1054 AD. The Cistercians supported monastic reform and restored the original Benedictine emphasis on manual labour. Priests, like monks, were required to be celibate, and the clergy were told to put away their wives. Princes were called upon to swear to observe the Truce of God, resulting in

fighting being reduced to a summer sport.

This great reform, called the Gregorian after Pope Gregory VII, resulted in the papacy of the 13th century functioning as a world government more effective than any before or since. The pope was the Lord above the nations. Intellectual life flourished, universities were founded, St Thomas Aquinas brought about a new synthesis of Christian theology and Aristotelian philosophy, while Gothic architecture gave expression to piety reaching for the stars, and beyond to the very throne of God.

But reforms, if they misfire, can bring new corruptions. The Christian princes broke the vows they had made to observe the Truce of God, and the only way to reduce warfare between Christians of the West proved to be by diverting their belligerence toward the infidels in the East. The peace movement ended in the Crusades. The imposition of clerical celibacy resulted in clerical concubinage, which was rife by the time of the Reformation in the 16th century. The papacy's success in controlling Europe politically involved the popes in political machinations to such an extent that by the 15th century, the papacy was in danger of becoming a secular city-state.

So far as property was concerned, the Church in the Middle Ages had approved of rent but not of usury. However, as the Church itself became increasingly wealthy, the doctrine that a money-lender should receive compensation for the gain that would have accrued had he used the money himself, was accepted. In domestic relations the emphasis in marriage was on children and faithfulness, rather than on falling in love.

A Swarm of Sects

The Church had been without serious divisions in the West from the early 5th to the 12th centuries. Education during this period was scant and intellectual interest even scantier. But with the relative failure of universal reform, small groups arose in the 11th and 12th centuries, resolved to carry out, among themselves, the changes that had proved impracticable in the Church as a whole. Southern France and northern Italy swarmed with sects. The Cathars had views similar to those of the ancient Gnostics while the Waldenses denied the authority of the orthodox Church, appointed lay preachers, and translated large parts of the

Gospels into the common speech.

To meet the threat of heresy, the Church launched the Inquisition, justified as being a work of love for saving souls from eternal damnation. The Cathars were wiped out, but the Waldenses found refuge near the timberline of the Italian Alps and survive to this day (see CATHARS; WALDENSES). The sectarian movements led by John Wyclif in England and John Huss in Bohemia were associated with the spirit of rising nationalism. Wyclif's followers, the Lollards, were largely suppressed, but those of Huss, who was burned at the stake in 1418, became so strong in Bohemia that eventually they were tolerated alongside of the Catholics. This was the first example in the Christian West of religious pluralism, the recognition of more than one religion within a given territory.

In the late Middle Ages the papacy was weakened by divisions, as a result of which there were sometimes two, or even three, popes at the same time. Church councils were called which threatened to supplant the papacy as the governing organ of the Church, but the popes regained control.

The Reformation

The opening years of the 16th century, eventually a period of vast upheaval, were characterized by an interlude of tolerance. The heretical sects of the Middle Ages had been suppressed and the Church felt sufficiently secure to suffer criticism. In fact there was much to criticize. Clerical concubinage was rife, and was tolerated to such an extent that a tax was laid on concubines. The bureaucratic machinery needed for the papacy to play its universal role had to be paid for, and the financial extortion by the Church that resulted was deeply resented, especially when the Renaissance popes spent money on wars and were so secularized as to make treaties with Turks against Christian princes. Excommunication lost its spiritual force when it was used against rulers because they had failed to make financial contributions to the papacy. Many people tried to influence God through external practices such as pilgrimages, the cult of relics, the intercession of the saints, and of the Virgin.

Then came the great reformation movement, of which one aspect was Martin Luther's attack in 1517 upon the whole

system of indulgences. These granted remission of penalties for sin, not only on earth but also in purgatory, and sometimes offered the forgiveness of sins. These indulgences were supposed to transfer the unused extra credits of the saints, who were better than they needed to be for their own salvation, to those whose accounts were in arrears. The recipient of the indulgence made a financial contribution to the Church.

Luther's attack was directed against the religious aspect of the system rather than the financial. He did not believe that anyone had any extra credits, as no-one could ever be good enough to earn salvation. God's forgiveness of, and favour to, those who have sinned is a sheer act of grace mediated to men through the sacrificial death of Christ.

Luther took the Bible as his authority, declaring that any man guided by the spirit of God is able to interpret the Bible correctly. Papal infallibility was denied. The superiority of the clergy to the laity was denied. The sacraments, especially the Mass, were so reinterpreted that no priestly class was considered necessary for their administration. Luther believed that all laymen are spiritually priests, though not ministers by vocation.

The Spread of Protestantism

The revolt of Luther was followed by the revolts of other reformers – Zwingli in Switzerland, Calvin in France, Knox in Scotland, and Cranmer in England. Christendom, in the sense of a unified Christian society, was shattered. The new divisions were to some extent national, becoming more so when the population became religiously unified as a result of the expulsion of minorities. Eventually, Protestantism was strongest in the north, and Catholicism in the south, a pattern that has led to the generalization that Protestantism was the religion of the Teutonic peoples and Catholicism of the Latin. But France for a time had an enormous Protestant element and France was a Latin country. Ireland was Roman Catholic, but not Latin. Bavaria and the Rhineland were Teutonic, but remained Catholic.

The result of this growing nationalism was a weakening of the papacy even in Catholic countries. There was a strong movement in France, the Gallican movement, that maintained the independence of the French Church against Rome, while the Catholic Church in Spain has often gone its own way regardless of papal pronouncements.

The main effect on the Roman Catholic Church was to tighten the dogma, the discipline and the bureaucratic structure of the Church. The secularized papacy of the Renaissance came to an end. The popes became as austere as the Puritans. Clerical celibacy was enforced and dogma was more rigidly formulated. This was the work of the Council of Trent, in the years between 1545 and 1563.

The violent conflicts of Roman Catholics and Protestants in the 16th and 17th cen-

turies brought to the fore the problems of Church and State and the problem of religious liberty. In effect, the solution was a system of religious liberty on a territorial basis, which carried with it the right of emigration. One region was to have only one religion and those who could not in conscience subscribe to it were not sent to the stake or the dungeons of the Inquisition but were free to emigrate.

This was not an ideal solution, and only lasted for a short time. As France learnt through the expulsion of the Huguenots, it is disastrous for a country to lose many of its finest citizens.

Religious Toleration

There are various reasons why religious pluralism within the single state was eventually tolerated. One was sheer weariness of war. The Thirty Years' War in Germany in the 17th century left cities with inhabitants dead of starvation in the streets with grass in their mouths. Another factor was trade. Holland was particularly sensitive to this consideration as she was the marketplace of the world and, if she restricted her commerce because of religious beliefs, her prosperity would suffer.

The deepest considerations were religious. The champions of religious liberty pointed out that faith cannot be constrained, that sincerity cannot be forced. Compulsion may make men into martyrs or hypocrites. It cannot make them into genuine converts. To burn a man because he refuses to save his life by renouncing his convictions is to burn him for telling the truth, that is, what he believes to be the truth. Sincerity does not necessarily make a man right, but insincerity makes him necessarily wrong.

England in the 17th century made the greatest progress towards religious liberty. This was partly because the Puritan struggle was between various Protestant groups, who were less bitter towards each other than they were towards the Church of Rome. Oliver Cromwell believed that the differences between Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists were unimportant, though Catholics, Anglicans and Quakers presented more of a problem. He did not want to suppress any religious group, although he was severe with Roman Catholics in Ireland on political grounds. He did not believe in the separation of Church and State but in an establishment based on the beliefs of three religious groups, Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist. Although his regime did not last long, it proved that religious pluralism and religious stability are compatible. The American system is basically the same. Although Church and State are separated, the State relies heavily on the three pillars of Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism for moral sanction.

Since the 18th century, Christianity has gradually been moving towards overcoming its own divisions. At the same time it has been wrestling with new scientific and social developments. Until recently this was more true of Protestants than of Roman Catholics. After the Council of

Trent, the Catholics continued to enhance rather than diminish their claims on behalf of the papacy, and at the same time felt a greater alienation from the contemporary world of thought. Protestants were more open to new ideas, even at the risk of making so many concessions as to depart radically from the Christian tradition.

One area of controversy has been natural science. The Catholic Church suppressed Galileo, and Luther and Calvin rejected the views of Copernicus on biblical grounds. However, many Protestants accepted his views and his writings were allowed to circulate. The theories of Newton and Galileo did not trouble the Protestants, and they accepted the new astronomy as an impressive commentary on the text 'the heavens declare the glory of God'. Serious conflict began only in the 19th century when geological discoveries cast doubt on the biblical account of the creation of the world in six days. Some scientists attempted to reconcile the two points of view by assuming that a day meant 1,000 years or even longer, and that God created the world in six of these periods. But biblical scholars retorted that the word 'day' in the book of Genesis meant 24 hours. Genesis conflicted with geology, and geology won. More liberal Protestants came to regard the book of Genesis as inspired mythology, not as a scientific treatise.

The doctrine of organic evolution was more disconcerting because it affected the understanding of man. If man is biologically descended from lower forms of life, among whom Nature is red in tooth and claw, is man ineradicably predatory and warlike by nature? If animals are mortal and man immortal, when in the scale of ascent did man become immortal? Some theologians have suggested conditional immortality, asserting that not all men are immortal but only those who are capable of living in the atmosphere of the spirit.

The application of historical techniques to the Bible raised the problems of uncertainties as to the texts and discrepancies between various accounts. These problems were passionately pursued from the 18th century onwards, especially in Germany and mainly by Protestants. Catholics were not granted freedom in the field of biblical study until the time of Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council, which opened in 1962.

Encouraging Democracy

Politically, Protestantism has been hospitable to, and has contributed toward, political democracy, largely as a result of the Puritan revolution in England and America. The Catholic Church, which is organized as a hierarchy, has preferred on the whole to deal with highly centralized governments. This situation has been modified in the United States where Catholics have recognized that both democracy and the separation of the Church and State might be advantageous to the Church. Had there been an autocratic government and an Established Church in the United States, neither would have been Catholic.

Modern theology centres on the doctrine



Sonia Halliday

of the Trinity: Father, Son and Spirit. In the case of God the Father, some schools of thought emphasize his immanence, a being who pervades the universe. This is true of Protestant Liberalism. Others stress transcendence, the belief that God exists beyond and apart from the universe.

Mystics, on the one hand, who are stupefied by the overwhelmingness of God, and scientists on the other, who are aghast at the immeasurable universe, shy away from all concrete language about God, especially from all personal adjectives. Many theologians turn to Christ as the focus of their piety because they 'can walk with Him and talk with Him'. In Pietist movements there has been a saccharine Jesus cult. Yet others emphasize the Spirit which lies at

The early Christians expected that their master would soon return in glory on the clouds of heaven to set up the kingdom of God on earth, and his coming was awaited with joyous expectancy: 19th century painting on a ceiling of the Rila monastery in Bulgaria

the heart of all rules and structures and doctrines. Believing this, they may sever themselves from any organized church and be led beyond Christianity to a combination of all religions.

Christianity expanded phenomenally during the 19th century, its greatest numerical gains having been among primitive peoples. Although it has made no serious inroads into the ranks of the world's other great religions, Christianity has influ-

enced other faiths, which have adopted Christian attitudes without acknowledging formal adherence to the faith. (See also JESUS; MARY; MASS; PAUL; and many other articles on Christian beliefs and practices.)

ROLAND H. BAINTON

FURTHER READING: The literature of the subject is vast, of course, but good modern books include R. H. Bainton, *The Horizon History of Christianity* (American Heritage Publ., 1964) and the volumes in the 'Pelican History of the Church' series; F. C. Copleston, *Medieval Philosophy* (Harper and Row, 1961); J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (Harper and Row, 1978); Basil Willey, *Christianity Past and Present* (Hyperion, 1980).

Two views, by an outsider and a Christian Scientist, of a movement which has aroused intense controversy ever since its foundation. The founder was one of the most remarkable women of the last 100 years

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

IN THE YEAR 1875 the 'discoverer and founder' of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910), published her book *Science and Health*. Frequently and extensively revised, a definitive edition appeared towards the end of Mrs Eddy's life as *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, the authoritative textbook of the movement. Mrs Eddy's other writings are regarded as valuable supplements to it. Formal doctrine has remained unchanged since the founder's death and none of the many commentaries on Christian Science by loyal members of the movement are regarded as authoritative. Mrs Eddy decreed that her textbook and the Bible were the movement's only 'preachers', and she swept away at one stroke the numerous pastors who initially occupied the pulpits of Christian Science churches.

Christian Science is both an interpretation of Scripture and the basis of a system of healing. It rejects the conventional doctrine of the Trinity. Jesus is said to have been a man, a Way-shower, who 'demonstrated' the truth by healing the sick, casting out demons and raising the dead. Christian Science claims to teach all men how to make the same type of 'demonstrations', which are not to be thought of as miracles, but rather the consequences of a true understanding of God.

Healings are wrought by assertions of the truth – the allness of God, good, and the nothingness of error, evil. Man is held to be entirely spiritual, a reflection of God: physical man, the man known to the senses is a 'counterfeit', and it is only this false, material man who can suffer.

Christian Science teaches that when men grasp this truth, they overcome the flesh and all the ills to which it is heir, and that ultimately man will overcome death itself, by knowing that there is no matter to die, but only spirit to enjoy eternal life. Man is enslaved to the body, when he should realize that he has all the attributes of God, whose character is expressed in seven synonyms: Principle, Mind, Soul, Spirit, Life, Truth, Love. All testimony of the senses is to be rejected, and only pure metaphysical ideas are to be entertained.

This endeavour to entertain only pure thoughts and to assert metaphysical truths is seen as both divine worship and scientific achievement. But the truth of Christian Science is to be tested pragmatically, in the healing of sickness and the elimination of all disharmony which, it is claimed, are achieved by its application.

There is a certain paradox in this, since it is maintained that, by denying the existence of matter and by affirming the absoluteness of spirit, so man's experience of the material world is improved and evil eliminated. The material world is an illu-

sion, but it is an illusion the improved experience of which is necessary to prove its illusory character. Man is healed by learning that there is nothing to heal, but in practice it is to improved physical effects that Christian Science must point for proof of its claim.

This metaphysical theory is supported by reference to the Bible, and scriptural texts are used to establish that this teaching is the substance of what Jesus taught. His revelation is demonstrated as what Mrs Eddy referred to as a 'science' in her own writings. Sin, like sickness, is an illusion, stemming from man's failure to realize his divine son-ship. Christian Science has no

Aspiring to the heights: Boston Christian Science Church Centre, 1970



doctrine of soul: since man is said to have no body, he is therefore all soul, the reflection of God, who is called Soul. Conventional ideas of heaven and hell have never been accepted. They are mere conditions of mind. The afterlife is little emphasized, but it is believed that man must progress into Christian Science, either in this stage of his existence or in the next.

Malicious Animal Magnetism

What man must do is to overcome the false claims of his mortal mind, from which all evil stems. This mortal mind has power over men only because they credit it with power. Its most specific form is 'malicious animal magnetism', on which Mrs Eddy laid the utmost stress, and which means conscious or unconscious evil thought, the source of all sin, sickness and death.

This concept is the most original and distinctive feature of Christian Science theology. In the early years of Christian Science, Mrs Eddy tended to identify malicious animal magnetism with individuals, particularly with her apostate students. Later she dealt with it as a more impersonal agency, sometimes attributable to other systems of thought (particularly to Theosophy, Spiritualism and Roman Catholicism) but always to be discounted by Christian Scientists, who were taught appropriate defensive work to protect their own thinking.

To the general public, Christian Science is best known for its rejection of medicine. Instead, it declares that real healing occurs only through its own agency. It has often been the boast of Christian Scientists that their ranks have been recruited from hospitals – and almost from the cemeteries. Accredited Christian Science practitioners undertake no other gainful employment but charge fees for their services. Any Christian Scientist who has undergone a week's course of instruction may, without charge, undertake mental work for others. A treatment consists in the practitioner 'knowing the truth' for his patient, praying for him by affirming scientific thoughts relevant to the case, and by passing on to the patient particular thoughts to 'hold on to'. These are usually texts from the Bible, extracts from Mrs Eddy's writings, or sometimes the words of Christian Science hymns.

Christian Science declares that real healing is not achieved by orthodox medicine but only through Christian Science. Where medicine appears to heal, this occurs only because the patient's thought is changed by receiving treatment. It is the mental operation, not the physical effect of drugs or medicine, which produces health. Christian Science treatment can be sought and administered by telephone.

The organization of the Christian Science movement underwent a number of radical changes in its early days, particularly in the period of its rapid growth in the 1880s and 1890s. At first, Christian Science was taught as a therapeutic system in institutes, and it was only gradually that the church organization, which Mrs Eddy also established, became predominant. At the beginning, so it is reported, Mrs Eddy had

expected Christianity to embrace her new teaching. When this did not occur, she provided her movement with its own ecclesiastical organization, with a permanent, highly centralized structure. She founded the First Church of Christ, Scientist, at Boston, Massachusetts, as the Mother Church of the movement, of which all other Christian Science churches were to be branches. The Directors of the Mother Church were established as the ultimate authorities in the movement, subject always to Mrs Eddy's will as long as she lived.

Her intention with regard to local churches was clear; they were to have no independent preachers, and indeed no professionals involved in their operation. They were allowed some autonomy in their local business affairs but in religious matters were completely controlled from Boston. Sunday lesson-sermons were to be read, without comment, by readers elected from the congregation. These sermons were to consist, as they still consist, of set readings from the Bible and from *Science and Health*. The 'First Reader' reads from the textbook and it is he (or she) who conducts the service; the 'Second Reader' reads from the Bible. A good Christian Scientist reads the quotations which constitute Sunday's sermon every day in the week preceding the Sunday on which the sermon is publicly read. The evening service is always a repetition of the morning service in any given church, not one word or one note being changed, and the sermon is identical in all Christian Science churches.

In most churches a 'testimony' meeting is held once a week, and on this occasion adherents describe their appreciation of Christian Science and recount its healing powers. The testimonies at these meetings tend to be highly stereotyped. Christian Science services lack the expressive qualities of most religious gatherings. Liturgical embellishments are eschewed: there are no special vestments; there is no choir, but often there is a soloist who performs once in each Sunday service. Musical expression and church decor are in restrained, impersonal taste. There are no intrinsically significant rituals. The communion service, held twice a year, is marked by a slight variation of ritual in which the congregation is, exceptionally, invited to kneel. Christian Science churches do not normally have a warm community life.

Growth and Division

The movement grew rapidly in America in its early years. Its optimism, emphasis on the benevolence of the Deity, and its novelty gave it a certain congruity with a rapidly expanding society. Its apparent reconciliation of Christianity and science, at a time when the two appeared to be in profound conflict, was undoubtedly an important factor in its early growth. Though the movement has not placed much emphasis on missionary work, Christian Science spread to Britain and other English-speaking countries before the end of the 19th century. In continental Europe, success was generally confined to Protestant countries, particularly Germany and Switzerland.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

SUBJECT FOR SUNDAY

Sunday
Church Services
11am. & 7:30pm.
Sunday School
11am.

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT

Wednesday
TESTIMONIES
OF HEALING
8pm.

READING ROOMS: 120 BLOOR ST. W. & 100 ADELAIDE ST. W.

ALL ARE WELCOME

In the early 1950s there were some 10,000 Christian Science practitioners in the world, about 80% of them in the United States. Almost 90% of all practitioners were women at that time. The movement has always had far more women members than men, but the very high ratio of women to men among practitioners probably reflects the fact that women, many of whom have other means of support, are much more likely than men to be able to forgo other gainful employment.

Especially in its early years, the movement was criticized and ridiculed by churchmen, doctors and sometimes by legislators. Christian Science healing has not been generally accepted outside the movement, and the medical profession has remained unconvinced by its claims.

The early days of the movement were also marked by internal disputes. Many of Mrs Eddy's early students quarrelled with her, and some established rival systems of metaphysical healing. After her reorganization of the government of the church, many local schisms were resolved by the system of duplicate membership of the church, by which the individual was more firmly attached to the Mother Church in Boston than to his branch church. Schismatics could join another branch, or found one, without having to lose their standing in the movement.

Even so, expulsions from the movement have been relatively frequent over the years, many of those expelled being teachers and practitioners who have challenged the authority of the Directors of the Mother Church. Others have been excommunicated for teaching Christian Science by unapproved methods. Most of the dissenters from the practice of government in the movement, and even those considered heretical in their statement of Christian Science, continued to affirm their loyalty to Mrs Eddy after their excommunication.

Divisions and struggles to gain control at the top were particularly marked during the decade after Mrs Eddy's death.

In 1936, at the last census of religious bodies in the United States, some 238,000 people were recorded as Christian Scientists in that country, and this certainly constituted the great majority of adherents in the world at the time. No more recent membership figures are available but the

Above Notice board in front of a Christian Science church in Canada *Below* Mrs Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Christian Science Movement: she emphasized that 'healing physical sickness is the smallest part of Christian Science. It is only the bugle-call to thought and action, in the 'higher range of infinite goodness'. Formal doctrine has remained unchanged since her death



number of practitioners declined in most American states and in Great Britain between 1953 and 1968. Obviously, numbers of practitioners are at best an indirect guide to the fortunes of the movement but except in California, Florida and Texas few new churches have been established in the last two decades and this suggests that Christian Science has now passed its period of growth and that it is likely to decline in the future.

(See also EDDY; NEW THOUGHT.)

A Way of Life

For its adherents, Christian Science is above all a way of life. Its radical reinterpretation of traditional Christianity has kept it, until recently, under fire from the religious establishments of the countries in which it has flourished. Its audacious pioneering in the field of religious therapeutics has, for the most part, won only

reluctant acknowledgement from the medical profession. Little serious scholarship has been devoted to it during the century of its existence, but this is now changing.

The period in which it appeared seethed with occultism, spiritism, 'animal magnetism' and all kinds of forays into the supernatural. From the outset, Mary Baker Eddy took sharp issue with these popular manifestations, as she also did with traditional Christian beliefs in special miracles. There was no such thing as a miraculous infraction of law, she held; the seeming miracle must be the natural result of a not yet apprehended law. As early as the 1870s she described the current spiritistic phenomena as the result of either trickery or autosuggestion, and in the still pre-Freudian 1880s she wrote in *Christian Healing*: 'When I learned how mind produces disease on the body, I learned how it produces the manifestations ignorantly imputed to spirits . . . The belief that produces this result may be wholly unknown to the individual, because it is lying back in the unconscious thought, a latent cause producing the effect we see.'

The phenomenon of Christian healing she put in an entirely different category. Genuine spiritual cures, in her view, came from a rational understanding of the nature and laws of the realm of being which is revealed through Christian experience. This wholly spiritual order, described in the New Testament as 'the kingdom of God . . . within you', constituted the inner structure of reality, the essential nature of man as the child of God. The New Testament healings, instead of being blindly accepted as miracles or summarily rejected as myths, were to be understood as evidence of the transforming power of ontological insight energized by Christian love. 'The miracle,' she wrote in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, 'introduces no disorder, but unfolds the primal order, establishing the Science of God's unchangeable law.'

To the deeply Christian Mrs Eddy the virgin birth, healing ministry, resurrection and ascension of Jesus represented the quintessential example of the power of Spirit over matter and of Life over death. His words, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father', were the guarantee not of a God made in the image of human personality but of a divine, inexhaustible, creative Love at the heart of existence, a Love that was made manifest in the compassionate power of the Christ.

Mrs Eddy's definition of God as the Principle of being was entirely compatible, in her view, with the concept of conscious purpose, care and creativity usually associated with belief in God as a personality: it simply united these with the idea of universal order and law. 'As the words *person* and *personal* are commonly and ignorantly employed,' she wrote in *Science and Health*, 'they often lead, when applied to Deity, to confused and erroneous conceptions of divinity and its distinction from humanity.' God is Person, she explained, only in the sense of being infinite Mind, Spirit and Soul.

In reducing matter to a limited and

fallacious kind of thinking — a mistaken 'mode of consciousness', in her own words — Mrs Eddy indicated that it must yield its tyranny over appearances in proportion as human experience was brought under the laws of spiritual being. This differed basically from the philosophical idealism that would make matter an idea in the mind of God. It also conflicted with 19th century physics, which believed in an irreducible matter-stuff. In effect, she was proposing a mind-matter continuum, with matter described as the lowest stratum of 'mortal mind' and that mind described in turn as 'matter's highest stratum'.

In her system a new dualism between mortal mind (the matter-mind continuum) and divine Mind (God expressing Himself through spiritual ideas) replaced the old one between mind and matter. This represented the absolute metaphysical distinction between error and truth, belief and understanding, appearance and reality.

Mrs Eddy's quarrel with hypnotism (animal magnetism) as a therapeutic agent was directed at its reliance on the energies of the human mind, on the power of suggestion (belief). Christian Science, like traditional Christianity, called for a surrender of the human mind to the divine, but not in terms of blind faith or a special esoteric knowledge, any more than in terms of directed suggestion or willed belief. It was rather a matter of exchanging belief for understanding.

The Importance of Healing

The central importance of healing to the Christian Scientist is that this is the area in which he feels that he can most concretely test his understanding of God and of man's relationship to God. What looks to many observers like a fixation on physical health may perhaps be better understood as a commitment to make religion practical. If quick relief from bodily pain were the Christian Scientist's major aim, a pill might be more attractive than study and prayer aimed at drawing him closer to God as the source of his true being. The emphasis on physical healing in the public 'testimonies' relate to the New Testament emphasis on healing as one of the major signs testifying to the coming of 'the kingdom'.

The concept of healing has been broadening among rank and file Christian Scientists over the years. In the foreword to a 1966 compilation entitled *A Century of Christian Science Healing*, published to commemorate the centenary of Mrs Eddy's 'discovery', the Christian Science Board of Directors brings this out and quotes her words from *Rudimentary Divine Science*: 'Healing physical sickness is the smallest part of Christian Science. It is only the bugle-call to thought and action, in the higher range of infinite goodness.' Christian Scientists, the foreword continues, apply the word 'healing' to 'the demonstration of spiritual wholeness in all the aspects of human living', and to the 'rectification of all the ills and evils of the human condition.'

This states the sweeping ideal. A final chapter of assessment in the same book

relates the ideal to the actuality. 'Whether a Christian Scientist participates in the social battles of our day as a liberal or a conservative, a fighter or a reconciler, a partisan or an independent, a private or a general, his ultimate purpose is to *heal*. Yet most Christian Scientists would probably agree that up to now only a small fraction of the healing dynamic of their religion has been utilized in relation to the urgent collective problems facing the world.'

Involvement in the World

Mrs Eddy's own concern in this direction is illustrated by her founding in 1908, when she was 87 years old, of the soon famous international daily newspaper *The Christian Science Monitor*. Generally accounted an outstanding achievement in secular journalism, the *Monitor* was also an integral part of the healing programme she envisaged for the Church of Christ, Scientist, and in her own estimate was her most important undertaking since the writing of *Science and Health*. As a unique form of social outreach by a church, it has aimed through the years to report the problems of the world in a balanced and realistic way.

While many signs point to a developing social awareness within the Christian Science Church, discussions with representatives of traditional Protestantism have led to a lessening of old tensions and suggest a closer integration of interest, if not of organization and doctrine, with the Christian community as a whole. The growth of a vigorous spiritual healing movement in the traditional churches, coupled with the social impact of psychotherapy in general and psychosomatic medicine in particular, have also left Christian Science less isolated in the contemporary scene.

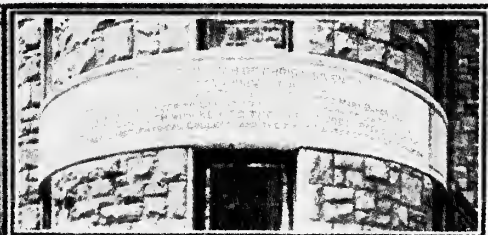
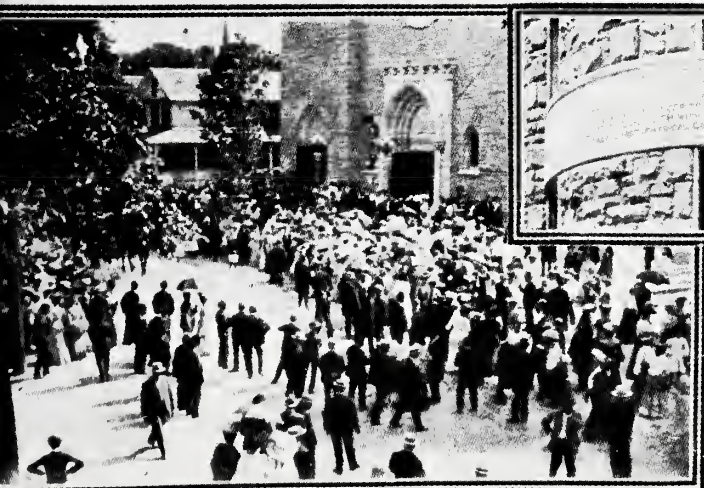
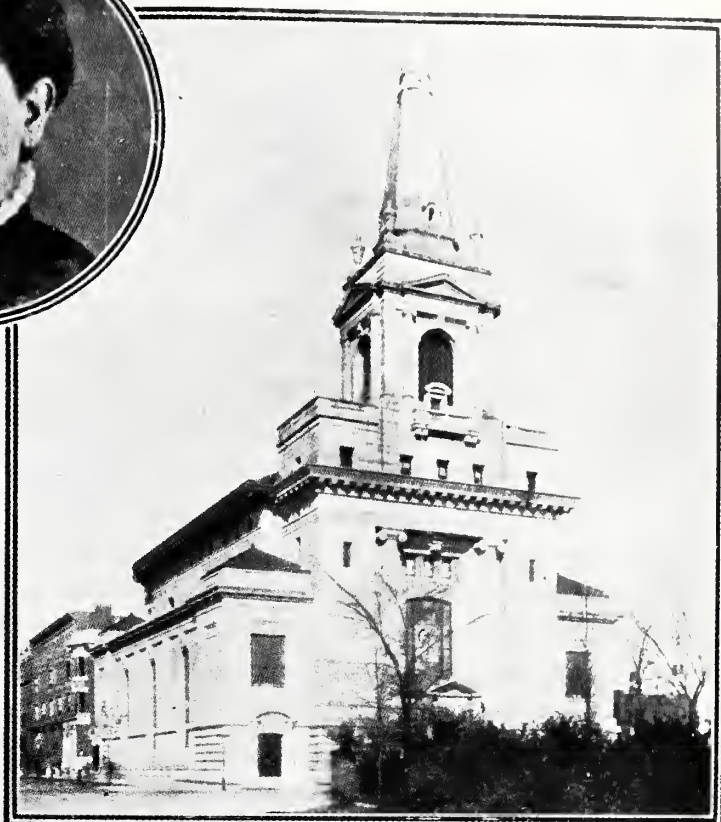
The chief problem for Christian Scientists now may be to maintain the spiritual radicalism which has constituted both their uniqueness and their reason for being. As with other 'errors' of the human condition, however, they see this as no real danger so long as they hold fast to the essential guide-lines laid down for them in the Bible and in Mrs Eddy's works. The Christian Science way of life is inevitably oriented toward healing, whether of the body physical or of the body politic, and Mrs Eddy put the issue briskly to her followers when she wrote in her *Miscellaneous Writings*: 'If Christian Science lacked the proof of its goodness and utility, it would destroy itself; for it rests alone on demonstration.'

FURTHER READING: Mrs Eddy's own works can be consulted at Christian Science reading rooms; see also Norman Beasley, *The Cross and the Crown* (Duell, 1952); John Dewitt, *Christian Science Way of Life* (Christian Science, 1971); H. A. S. Kennedy, *Mrs Eddy* (Mitre Press, London, 1947); B. R. Wilson, *Sects and Society* (University of California Press, 1961).

Illustration attacking the growth of the Movement, published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1906 when Mrs Eddy was reported to be dying: in fact she died in 1910

REFERENCES

ILLUSTRATIONS: BUREAU AND N. H. HODGE



WAITING THE ARRIVAL OF MRS. EDDY AT THE CONCORD CHURCH

VISIT OF CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS TO MRS. EDDY'S HOME AT CONCORD.

Christian Science has been much talked of lately, owing to the reported incurable illness of its founder, Mrs. Eddy, and also a recent case in the English Courts, where a Christian Scientist

Despite many attempts in the past to suppress Christmas, this ancient midwinter feast has survived, but has undergone many changes. Starting as a pagan festival and later adopted by the Church, today Christmas has come full circle. The religious aspects no longer predominate and it has become, as it was originally, a time of feasting and revelry

CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS HAS ITS ORIGIN in two ancient pagan festivals, the great Yule-feast of the Norsemen and the Roman Saturnalia. Extending from Advent, which begins on 30 November or the Sunday nearest to it, to Candlemas Day on 2 February, it was close enough to the winter solstice to acquire many of the associations of the Norse ceremony: the Yule-log, the ever-green decorations in houses and churches, even the Christmas feast itself. These elements were combined with the Saturnalia of the Romans to provide the basis for the early Christian festival.

During the Saturnalia, gifts were made by the wealthy to the poor in honour of the golden age of liberty when Saturn ruled the known world, and slaves were allowed to change places and clothing with their masters. They even elected their own mock king who, for the period of the festival, ruled as a despot. The Saturnalia involved the wildest debauchery, and was a festival worthy of Pan himself.

Naturally it came under heavy censure from the early Church and despite the fact that Jesus Christ and the saints gradually replaced the pagan deities it was long considered completely out of character with the Christian ideal. However, the festival was far too strongly entrenched in popular favour to be abolished, and the Church finally granted the necessary recognition, believing that if Christmas could not be suppressed it should be preserved in honour of the Christian God.

Once given a Christian basis the festival became fully established in Europe with many of its pagan elements undisturbed.

It was only in the 4th century that 25 December was officially decreed to be the birthday of Christ, and it was another 500 years before the term Midwinter Feast was abandoned in favour of the word Christmas. Even then on the Continent the festival continued to show many features inherited from the Saturnalia. In particular, the Feast of Fools was a wild debauch reminiscent of the pagan past. The Normans when they invaded England in 1066, introduced a Master of Ceremonies into the English Christmas. Known as the Lord of Misrule, his counterpart in Scotland was called the Abbot of Unreason. A mock king, he ensured that Christmas was conducted along traditionally pagan lines. The custom of electing boy bishops, youths chosen from the cathedral choirs and accorded the honours due to bishops, also started at this time.

The main contributions of the medieval

period to the Christmas ceremony were the carol and the nativity drama. During the 15th century Father Christmas was already known by that name, although he was then merely a background figure to the Christmas season.

The coming of the Reformation at first had little effect upon the pagan content of Christmas. The number of saints was reduced drastically and the boy bishops were abolished but on the whole Christmas continued to be celebrated as it had always been. The newly discovered turkey appeared on the Christmas table before 1573, in addition to the boar's head, once symbol of the Scandinavian Sun Boar. The favourite drink at this time was a concoction of hot ale, eggs, apples and spices known as lamb's wool. A century later, this was replaced by punch.

The undisguised pagan element in Christmas had often provoked criticism from extreme Protestants but the festival was not really affected by their beliefs until the Puritans came to power in the 17th century. Christmas was attacked as 'the old heathens' feasting day to Saturn their God' and carols were forbidden.

Father Christmas's importance in the festivities of Christmas is a comparatively modern phenomenon. Long ago he was a minor character in mumming plays, with no connection with either children or presents. He still has a role in the procession and dance of the mummers of Marshfield in Gloucestershire on Boxing Day



Finally, 25 December was proclaimed a fast day in 1644. The new rule was enforced by the army, which spent much of its time pulling down the greenery that festive 'pagans' had attached to their doors. In Scotland the prohibition was enforced with great rigour. This anti-Christmas attitude spread to Puritan territories in America. The Church established special services for Christmas in Boston during the 1690s, but many civil authorities strongly opposed this move. And it was not until some 150 years later that Christmas first became a legal holiday in the United States, in Alabama in 1836.

The First Christmas Trees

In Britain during the 18th century the popularity of the Christmas festival and revelling began to decline, and during the first quarter of the 19th century the decline continued — to such an extent that William Sandys, the antiquary, began to record old Christmas customs before they were forgotten. Unknown to Sandys, however, social conditions were laying the foundations for a glorious revival of the Christmas spirit, as a reaction to the wretchedness and drab poverty that was a by-product of the Victorian age. The festival we know today, colourful, sentimental, extravagant, and very much centred on the family, is a typical product of that period, not least in its vague compassion for the infant Jesus and his parents, pictured (incorrectly) as homeless outcasts. As early as 1841 *Punch* suggested

that the Christmas season should be a time for helping the poor and hungry, a sentiment that was given tremendous impetus by Charles Dickens in his *Christmas Carol* two years later. So the custom arose of a special benevolent Christmas dinner for the poor, gushingly described in the song 'Christmas Day in the Workhouse' by George Sims, where

... with clean washed hands and faces
In a long and hungry line
The poor sit at the table
For this is the hour they dine.

Many authorities have claimed that Martin Luther first introduced the idea of the Christmas tree to 16th century Germany; but it is more likely that the use of the tree has roots in the old worship of trees by the tribesmen of northern Europe. Certainly the Germans first brought the tree into Christmas before other peoples. And they took it to America: German mercenaries, fighting on the British side in the War of Independence, raised Christmas trees in their camps, and German settlers in Pennsylvania also set up their trees. It was a longer time coming to Britain, but its popularity there was ensured when Queen Caroline erected a tree at a royal Christmas celebration in 1821, and when in 1841 Prince Albert provided one for a children's party at Windsor.

Christmas soon became popular once again, although in Scotland it was a long time before religious prejudice could be overcome. Some customs, such as Twelfth Night

mumming and wassailing, vanished but others rapidly took their place. The Christmas greeting card first appeared in 1844, and by the 1870s had become firmly entrenched in Britain and the United States. In the 1850s the paper hat had become a feature of Christmas parties, where games very similar to the frolics of the medieval Feast of Fools were played. Kissing under the mistletoe also became a popular custom in England and America, and is a reflection of the festival's ancient Scandinavian origins (see MISTLETOE).

Americans soon added much more greenery to their Christmas decorations, including holly wreaths on front doors, and illuminated the trees growing in front gardens. The United States also instituted the 'communal' tree: the first was put up by the people of Pasadena, on Mount Wilson in 1909, and the next went up in 1912 in Madison Square Garden, for the people of New York. In Colorado in the 1930s, the people of Palmer Lake began a communal Yule-log ceremony, where the log was ritually found, and burned in a special fireplace made in the town hall.

Feast of Light

Christmas has always been a Feast of Light, and so candles and special fires have had major roles in the festive traditions. Today the candles have been replaced, on inflammable evergreen trees, with special electric lights, but the symbol is the same. In Spanish-American parts of the south-western United States, small fires are lit



Left The strong pagan elements in Christmas reflect the influence on it of the ancient Yule-feast of the Norsemen and the Roman Saturnalia. They include the tree, feasting, drinking and gaiety, the mummers in animal masks who have now turned into pantomime companies, and the use of evergreens for decoration
Above Santa Claus on ice: one of the most popular symbols of Christmas, he is also one of the most commercialized





Robert Estall

The immense Christmas tree outside New York's Rockefeller Center (facing page) and the Regent Street decorations (right) contrast sharply with carol singers (above) and the traditional 19th century pastime of 'snapdragon', snatching at raisins alight with brandy



Mansell Collection

outside houses, and lighted candles set into bags of sand illuminate roofs and walls.

Santa Claus, probably the most widely accepted of all the symbols of Christmas, arrived in Britain sometime during the 1880s from America, where he had long reigned as the gift-bringing St Nicholas of the German and Dutch settlers. As St Nicholas he had become famous as a result of Clarke Moore's poem 'The Night Before Christmas', published in 1823. By the 1890s the English Father Christmas, originally a minor character in a mummer's play, had been absorbed into the personality of his American counterpart, and become the jovial figure that he is today.

Holiday for Ghosts

St Nicholas was only one of a number of legendary personalities who traditionally bring gifts during the Christmas season, and who invariably come from some unknown land to which they return after the ceremony. Others are the Knight Rupprecht of north Germany, who is possibly identified with Odin, and the Three Kings who, at Epiphany (January 6) bring gifts to the children of Spain. Occasionally the bearer of gifts is a woman, as in Alsace where she appears wearing a crown of candles, or as in Italy where the good fairy Befana fills children's stockings with toys when they go to bed on the eve of Epiphany.

In Holland St Nicholas is accompanied by a forbidding black companion, and in other lands the Christmas scene is not without its ghosts and demons, supporting the old

tradition that it is the time of year when spirits and trolls make high holiday. Only in Britain has Father Christmas shed his forbidding aspects, although here, as elsewhere, children are solemnly warned that only if they are very good will they receive their presents.

Scarlet Flowers

There is a combination of both old and new in the many pleasing customs that grace the Christmas season. Old holly and ivy together with ancient mistletoe have now been joined by the scarlet flower of the poinsettia, which has become a common motif on greeting cards and wrapping paper. The elevation of this wild flower to a place of honour began in the United States. It is said that a little Mexican boy made his offering of humble wild flowers to the infant Jesus and that when they were placed under the altar the flowers turned scarlet.

Boxing Day, which falls on St Stephen's Day, 26 December, was originally the time when donations were made in the Church, or to the apprentices of local tradesmen. It survives in modern times as little more than a sporting holiday.

Many minor customs reflect the pagan traditions of the season. The sergeant-major serving tea to privates on Christmas morning is an echo of the Saturnalian custom in which master and slave exchanged roles; similarly the pantomime tradition that the principal boy is played by a girl and the 'dame' by a male comic. Telling ghost stories by the fireside is a relic of the

belief that at this particular time of year the family ghosts return to their old homes. Some quite ordinary actions can be of symbolic importance, as is illustrated by the superstition that for every mince pie eaten there will be a happy month in the year to come.

Other traditions have a solemn content as, for example, 'a green Christmas means a full churchyard', which is countered by 'a white Christmas means a happy New Year'. At midnight on Christmas Eve cattle in the barns are said to turn to the east and bow, while horses reverently kneel.

The Christmas season popularly ends with Twelfth Night on 5 January, and this is generally accepted as being the date on which all evergreen decorations must be taken down if the luck of the year is to last. Twelfth Night was once a time for eating Twelfth Cakes, but this custom is now almost extinct.

In the Church, however, the Christmas season lasts until Candlemas Day, 2 February, the feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary, held in honour of the occasion when she presented Christ in the Temple. During the Candlemas ceremony lighted candles are blessed, and carried in procession, celebrating the fact that Jesus Christ was called 'the light of the world'.

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: W. Auld, *Christmas Traditions* (Gale, 1968, c1931); W. Dawson, *Christmas, Its Origin and Associations* (Gale, 1968, c1902); T.G. Crippen, *Christmas and Christmas Lore* (Gale, 1976).



Robert Estall

CIRCE

THE FAIR-HAIRED SORCERESS Circe is described in the *Odyssey* as a goddess, although her reputation throughout mythology is rather that of a witch. She was the daughter of Helios, the sun god, and sister of Aeetes, the divine wizard and King of Colchis. Another celebrated witch, Medea, was her niece.

Circe was banished to the isle of Aeaea, after she had poisoned her husband, the King of the Sarmatians, a nomadic people of Persia. Circe's island has been sited as lying at the head of the Adriatic, not far from the mouth of the river Po; according to Hesiod, however, Aeaea lay off the coast of Latium, now a part of Italy, in the promontory called Circaeum, which was at one time an island.

Circe lived in a marble palace surrounded by woods, practising her magic arts and singing as she sat by her loom. She was attended by nymphs and a troop of wild beasts, whom she had transformed from men she had ensnared. When Odysseus's men landed on her island, they cast lots to decide who should stay to guard the ship and who should go to reconnoitre the land. Odysseus's friend Eurylochus set out with a band of men and, attracted by Circe's singing, they were drawn to the palace. Wild beasts came out to meet them, but instead of attacking the men they fawned on them and made them welcome. Circe

invited them to dine at her table and all entered unsuspecting, except Eurylochus who stayed behind, fearing a trap.

As soon as the sailors had drunk the goddess's drugged wine, she struck them with her wand and turned them into hogs. Eurylochus escaped and told Odysseus what had happened. He set off to rescue friends and on the way he met the god Hermes who gave him a magic herb named moly, to protect him against Circe's magic. When Circe attempted to transform Odysseus, she found that her magic was useless. Odysseus forced her to restore his men to human shape.

Circe, who had become enamoured of Odysseus, by her wiles persuaded him remain for a year on her island. At length Odysseus became restive and was determined to be on his way again. Circe advised him how to navigate the River of Ocean and descend into Hades, and how to deal with the ghosts. When Odysseus returned to Aeaea, having been advised about his own future by the ghost of Tiresias, Circe sent him off on his homeward voyage to Ithaca. She warned him against the Sirens and against Scylla and Charybdis, also of the fatal consequences that would follow if any of his men were to kill and eat the cattle of the Sun on the island of Thrinacia. Circe is an important figure in the *Odyssey* and it is due to her warnings and advice that Odysseus finally reaches home.

She appears from time to time in later literature, always in connection with

Odysseus. She bears him a son, Telegonus according to the *Telegonia*, the lost poem by the epic poet Eugammon of Cyrene, which has survived only in a prose summary. Telegonus comes to Ithaca, seeking his father. Arriving at night, he is mistakenly attacked as a raider and mortally wounds Odysseus with his poisoned spear. He then carries off Odysseus's body and also Penelope, Odysseus's wife and their son Telemachus to Circe, who makes them immortal with her magic powers. Telemachus marries Circe and Penelope marries Circe's son, Telegonus.

In folk tales told from western Europe to Mongolia, Circe's story has many counterparts. It has been suggested that such folk tales spread from the Near East and originated in the Babylonian myth of Ishtar, who killed her lovers when she became tired of them. During the progress from myth to folklore, the slaughter of the goddess's lover became changed into transformation into beasts.

Circe, it has also been suggested, may be related to the powerful ancient Mediterranean goddess known as the 'Lady of the Beasts', and her image has been found engraved upon Minoan gems a millennium before Homer's day. Flanked by lions, she crowned the main gate of Mycenae at the time of the Trojan War. Around the year 1200 BC, invading Dorians drove the goddess's ancient worship from the shores of Greece, but it lingered for centuries in Italy and places further west.

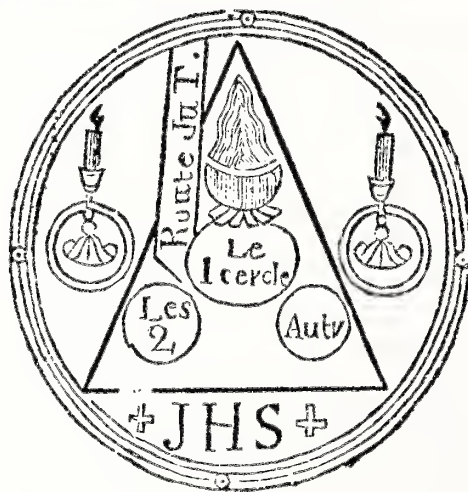
From ancient rites to astrology, alchemy and magic, the circle is one of the most powerful and most widely used of all symbols

CIRCLE

IF YOU WANT TO DEPICT a group of things, linked together, complete in itself and separated from everything outside the group, the shape which most effectively expresses completeness and separateness at the same time is the circle. A group of people linked by a common aim or interest which for the moment sets them apart from others may call themselves a 'circle', the old-fashioned 'ladies' sewing circle', for instance, or the Rotarians; and the group of friends and acquaintances of someone would constitute their social 'circle'.

These ideas of completeness and apartness lie behind the confusingly paradoxical uses of one of the most powerful and most widely employed of all symbols. Sometimes it stands for the sun, or for the sun's course through the year, or for time in general. The zodiac is the circle of the sun's apparent progress through the stars in a year, and astrological horoscopes are nowadays almost always drawn in a circular form. Clock faces are usually circular too, showing the remorseless, ever-repeated round of the hours.

As a symbol of time and of the ups and downs of fortune which time brings to every man, the circle often takes the form of a wheel (see WHEEL). But if the circle is a



Magic circle from *Le Veritable Dragon Rouge*, a 16th century magical textbook: the magician and his assistants stand in the triangle, with candles on either side and a brazier of charcoal in front; the inscription JHS stands for Jesus

symbol of time and its divisions, it is also a symbol of eternity, because it consists of an endless line. Standing for sun, the stars in their courses, time and eternity, it can also mean heaven and perfection. Some of the Greek philosophers said that the circle is the perfect figure and circular motion the perfect motion, and in the 13th century the great theologian Thomas Aquinas agreed, on the ground that in a circle a return is made to the beginning. Here is the circle as a complete whole.

Whole and Hole

The circle is a symbol of 'all things' because it can be imagined as a line drawn round everything but at the same time it is a symbol of 'one thing', because it is a single figure. It is therefore an emblem of the proposition that 'All is One', that all the various phenomena of the universe are linked together in a unity. The alchemical symbol called the *ouroboros* is a demonstration of this. It is a circle formed by a snake or a dragon swallowing its own tail, and sometimes bearing the Greek phrase *En To Pan*, 'all is one'.

This phrase is made of three words having seven letters, and $3 + 7 = 10$. Again, ten means 'all things' cause it completes the series of the primary numbers, of whose combinations all other numbers are constructed, but ten also means 'the One', because it is made of 1 and 0, and $1 + 0 = 1$.

The circle is a whole but also a hole. It is the symbol of nought, 0, and so it stands for emptiness, non-existence, nothing. But it is the Nothing which contains the potential existence of everything, the primeval chaos from which God made the world, the 'abyss' or 'ground' or 'womb' of all being (see BREATH; CABALA).

The Magic Circle

The use of a circle to mark the boundary of an area which is sacred, set apart from everyday life and to be protected against worldly or evil influences, is very ancient. The stone circles of Stonehenge, Avebury and many other prehistoric sites are



famous examples. The Babylonians drew a circle of flour round the bed of a sick man to keep demons away from him. A Roman ambassador to a foreign potentate would draw a circle round himself with his staff, to show that he should be safe from attack. Medieval German Jews drew a circle round the bed of a woman in childbirth to ward off demonic attack, and the words 'Sanvi, Sansanvi, Semangelaf, Adam and Eve, barring Lilith' were chalked on the door or the walls for additional protection.

In medieval and modern European textbooks of ritual magic the circle is of great importance. The magician and his assistants stand inside a circle to protect themselves from the spirits, demons or forces they intend to conjure up. But the circle is not only intended to keep something out but also to keep something in – the magical energy which the magicians will summon up from within themselves in the course of the ceremony. It is this energy which will force the spirit to appear and if it were not for the circle the energy would flow off in all directions and be dissipated. The circle keeps it inside a small area and so concentrates it. The same motive lies behind the circle of people who link their hands at a seance.

The magic circle should be nine feet in diameter, drawn on the floor or the ground with a sword or a knife, or with charcoal or chalk. Inside this circle is drawn a slightly smaller one, eight feet in diameter. In the narrow rim between the two circles are bowls of water, crosses, names of power

(see NAMES) and plants like vervain, which demons are said to dislike, to reinforce the barrier against hostile forces. There must be no gap or break in the circle, through which an evil influence could get into it and take possession of the magician, and when the magician has entered the circle he must close it carefully behind him.

The 18th century French *Grand Grimoire* introduces a grislier note, saying that the circle should be made of the skin of a young goat, cut into strips and fastened down with four nails from a dead baby's coffin. The magician stands in a triangle, drawn inside the circle, with a wax candle placed in a circlet of vervain on either side.

A Modern Ritual

A modern formula for drawing the magic circle is given in Dion Fortune's book *Psychic Self-Defence*. The magician begins by facing east and making the sign of the cross, touching his forehead, shoulders and solar plexus. This is not the Christian cross but the equal-armed cross, standing for the four elements and the four cardinal points, and so for mastery of all things (see CROSS). Next, he imagines that he is holding a great cross-handled sword in his right hand, point upwards. He says, 'In the Name of God I take in hand the Sword of Power for defence against evil and aggression.'

He imagines himself as a 'tremendous armed and mailed figure, vibrating with the force of the Power of God.' He draws the circle on the floor with the point of the imaginary sword, in a line of imagined

In ancient times a circle often marked the boundary of a sacred area, and protected it against evil influences: passage grave in County Meath, Ireland

golden flame. Facing east and clasping his hands above his head, he says, 'May the mighty archangel Raphael protect me from all evil approaching from the east.' He repeats the same formula facing south, west and north in turn, naming Michael, Gabriel and Uriel respectively.

This circle has been drawn 'deosil' or clockwise, moving to the right, which is the side of good. In black magic the circle would be drawn the opposite way, moving to the left or 'widdershins', a word derived from an Anglo-Saxon phrase meaning 'to walk against', and which means moving against the direction of the sun and therefore in an unnatural and evil manner.

Circumambulation, moving round something in a circle, is a very old magical and religious rite, and circular dances as a part of ritual are known from all over the world (see CAROLE; DANCE). In eastern Europe, at least until recently, at a Jewish wedding it was the custom for the bride to walk round her husband three or seven times while they were under the wedding canopy. The original purpose was probably to keep the pair and their marriage safe from evil by drawing a protective circle round them. (See also RING.)

FURTHER READING: Richard Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967).

CLAIRVOYANCE

THE TERM CLAIRVOYANCE is used by parapsychologists to refer to a supposed variety of extra-sensory perception (see ESP) in which the information concerned is related to physical objects or events. It is generally contrasted with 'telepathy', in which the information acquired relates to events in or states of a mind other than that of the person who perceives it.

If it is further admitted that precognitive clairvoyance and precognitive telepathy may take place, it becomes extremely difficult to design an experiment which would in theory distinguish clairvoyance from telepathy, because sooner or later the 'targets' (such as cards in a card-guessing experiment) will become known to the experimenter who checks the guesses, and hence accessible to precognitive telepathy by the guesser. For these and kindred reasons modern parapsychologists tend to be cautious in their use of the words 'clairvoyance' and 'telepathy'.

The term 'clairvoyance', however, has commonly been, and still is, used in an older, wider and linguistically more correct way, according to which any apparent instance of ESP in which the information presents itself in the form of a visual image or visual hallucination may be ascribed to clairvoyance – meaning as it does 'clear-sightedness'. Comparable auditory cases are ascribed to 'clairaudience'.

Hence all sorts of fortune-tellers, crystal-gazers, 'psychic consultants', and so forth, are apt to be styled clairvoyants. In 'clairvoyant mediumship', the medium concerned, usually without passing into trance (see MEDIUMS; TRANCE), claims to see and hear the deceased friends and relatives of persons present, and to relay messages from them. A demonstration of this 'platform' clairvoyance forms the centrepiece of most Spiritualist church services.

The deliverances of platform clairvoyants are sometimes remarkably accurate, but are very difficult to assess, and have not often been seriously investigated, because it is impossible to be sure what prior opportunities the medium may have of acquiring information about the audience.

There have, however, been a few extended studies (notably those published by E. Osty, G. Pagenstecher and W. F. Prince in the 1920s) of the ability of certain gifted sensitives to give clairvoyant 'readings' for individuals brought to them by the experimenter; or (very often) to give such readings when simply handed objects which had belonged to the target individuals (see PSYCHOMETRY).

The readings might embrace the past, present and future of the individuals concerned, and their personal characteristics, emotional states, homes, belongings, etc. It is impossible here to convey an adequate impression of the strengths and weaknesses of this material; but there is no doubt that certain of the cases were very remarkable. For instance, Pagenstecher's subject was once handed (without further information) a carefully sealed piece of paper. She



The term 'clairvoyance' can apply to any form of ESP in which the information is received as a visual image – even fairground crystal-gazing

described a man who (amongst other features) had a prominent scar above his right eyebrow. She also described the sinking of a large liner, and the man writing on the paper, corking it in a bottle and throwing it into the sea. The scrap of paper had in fact been found in a bottle, washed up on the Azores. On it a man had written a farewell message to his wife in Havana, stating that his ship (apparently the *Lusitania*) was going down. The wife in Havana was found, recognized her husband's handwriting, and concurred with the clairvoyant's description of him.

Perhaps the best-known phenomena that have passed under the name of clairvoyance are the cases of 'travelling clairvoyance' that achieved prominence in the wake of the animal magnetic (or mesmeric) movement of the mid-nineteenth century (see MAGNETISM). Certain 'mesmerized' subjects developed the apparent ability to 'travel' while in trance to distant locations not known to them (frequently the homes of persons present), and report on the scenes to be found there (there is some similarity to OUT-OF-THE-BODY EXPERIENCES).

One of the most remarkable of these 'travelling clairvoyants' was the French professional magnetic subject, Alexis Didier. To take just one example of his performances: in 1851 Alexis was visited without warning in Paris by the Rev. G.H. Townshend, a well-known English poet and writer. Townshend had not previously met Alexis, he did not reveal his name, and he magnetized Alexis himself.

At his request Alexis 'visited' both Townshend's town house (in London) and his house near Lausanne, Switzerland. He described both houses with accuracy and provided many details of the numerous pic-

tures with which they were both furnished.

There is no doubt that the career and feats of Alexis, like those of certain other travelling clairvoyants from the 19th century, present considerable puzzles. It is of course highly unlikely that these puzzles can be retrospectively solved; and travelling clairvoyance, for whatever reason, markedly subsided with the decline of the mesmeric movement. However, in recent years, somewhat analogous phenomena have been revived and experimentally investigated by modern parapsychologists under the name of 'remote viewing'.

In these experiments, the standard procedure has been to isolate the subject, while a target site is randomly chosen from a list of possible sites within a given, moderately extended, area. Usually members of the team then proceed to the designated site, and the subject (not hypnotized, but possibly in a state of relaxation) visualizes and describes the location.

Subsequently the subject's description is compared to each listed site by independent assessors, who are unaware which was the site actually selected. Highly significant levels of correct matching have been achieved. It may be that such experiments will eventually throw further light on the old phenomenon of travelling clairvoyance.

ALAN GAULD

FURTHER READING: E. Osty, *Supernormal Faculties in Man: an Experimental Study* (Methuen, 1923); E.J. Dingwall ed, *Abnormal Hypnotic Phenomena: a Survey of Nineteenth-Century Cases* (J. & A. Churchill, 1967-68); R. Targ and H. Puthoff, *Mind-Reach* (Jonathan Cape, 1977); R.G. Jahn and B.J. Dunne, *Margins of Reality: the Role of Consciousness in the Physical World* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987); R. Broughton, *Parapsychology: the Controversial Science* (Ballantine Books, 1991).

Almost nothing is known of one of the greatest mystical writers, the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, yet thousands of Christians have gained help and solace from this 14th century work, which argues that the dark cloud which shuts us off from God can be penetrated with God's aid, not by the intellect but only by a sharp dart of love

CLOUD OF UNKNOWING

THE AUTHOR of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, one of the most famous of all mystical works, is himself unknown. Even the date when it was written is still uncertain although its style and other evidence place it in the late 14th century.

The author belonged to a group of mystical writers which included Richard Rolle of Hampole, Walter Hilton and Julian of Norwich (see HILTON; JULIAN OF NORWICH), and which arose at the same time as the Rhineland and Flemish mystical school, among whose members were Eckhart (see ECKHART), Tauler, Suso, and Ruysbroek.

The two groups, however, appear to have developed independently, although along parallel lines. They were both products of a similar intellectual climate which seems to have fostered the search for an experimental form of religion. Both groups drew their inspiration from a writer known to us as Pseudo-Dionysius, whose works were first heard of in Constantinople in the 6th century AD.

The teaching of the *Cloud* insists throughout on the impossibility of knowing God by human reason. Right at the beginning of the work occurs the passage that defines its theme:

For of all other creatures and their works – yea, and of the works of God himself – may a man through grace have fullness of knowing, and well can he think of them; but of God himself can no man think.

And towards the end, appealing to Dionysius, the author says, 'The most godly knowing of God is that which is known by unknowing.' The 'cloud of unknowing', in fact, which lies between God and man is pierced not by the intellect but only by a

sharp dart of love. The people for whom he is writing, the author says, are those who aim at being perfect followers of Christ, not merely by the practice of good works but through contemplation. Like Hilton and the other English mystics mentioned above, he uses what was then a new approach to religion, the cult of contemplation.

The word contemplation, in this its technical, mystical sense, means a mental prayer based on intuition rather than on reason, and is distinct from meditation. In the *Cloud* contemplation is seen, according to the principles laid down by Dionysius, as being beyond the intellect. The working of the intellect can only hinder it, and so it must consist in concentrating the mind on the simplest idea of God, with all created things rigidly excluded.

This darkness and this cloud . . . is betwixt thee and thy God, and hindereth thee, so that thou mayest neither see him clearly by light of understanding in thy reason, nor feel him in sweetness of love in thine affection. And therefore shape thee to bide in this darkness as long as thou mayest, evermore crying after him whom thou lovest. For if ever thou shalt see him or feel him, as it may be here, it must always be in this cloud and in this darkness. And if thou wilt busily travail as I bid thee, I trust in his mercy that thou shalt thereto come

A Beam of Ghostly Light

But this initial effort is not contemplation, though the writer believes that to one in the frame of mind God will bestow this formless knowledge. He makes it very clear that it is God who must be sought, not an experience, but he does say that it is possible that of his goodness God will sometimes grant a mystical experience:

Then will he (God) sometimes peradventure send out a beam of ghostly light, piercing this cloud of unknowing that is betwixt thee and him, and show thee some of his secrets, the which man may not and cannot speak . . .

Much research and speculation over many years has gone into the attempt to identify the author of the *Cloud*. At one time it was suggested that Walter Hilton may have been responsible, but this theory has now been abandoned. It seems likely, however, that Walter Hilton knew the author, who

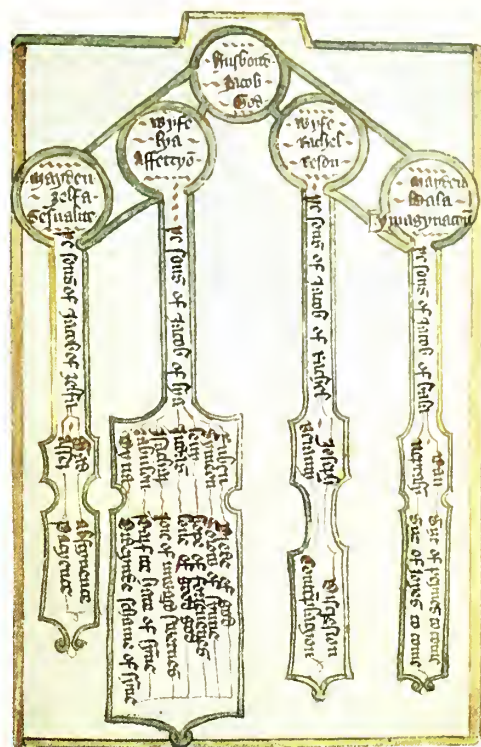


Illustration from the *Cloud of Unknowing* showing the genealogical descent of the twelve sons and one daughter born to the patriarch Jacob, later called Israel, by his two wives and their respective handmaidens: the sons' descendants became the twelve tribes of Israel, and each of them is here linked with one of the qualities of the faithful worshipper of God

was himself closely acquainted with the work of Richard Rolle.

The language of the *Cloud* suggests that the author lived in the northeast Midlands of England. Some scholars have suggested that he was a Carthusian monk, others that he was a secular priest, but his identity remains an unsolved mystery.

LANCELOT SHEPPARD

FURTHER READING: *Cloud of Unknowing and Other Works* translated by Clifton Wolters (Penguin, 1978); J. McCann ed., *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Burns, Oates, London, 1952); for general historical background to the subject, J. Huzinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (St. Martin, 1924).

Clover

A three-leaved clover is a symbol of the Trinity and a protection against evil and witchcraft; the four-leaved variety is also lucky, provided it is not given away, and is supposed to give its owner clairvoyant powers; five-leaved clovers are unlucky unless given away.



Coal

A rock which burns, a paradoxical quality which suggests that it contains powerful magic: it is lucky to find a piece in the street; coal brings good luck if carried in the pocket and there are cases of burglars using it in this way, of schoolchildren carrying it with them to examinations, and of prisoners taking it with them to their trials; in Scotland and the north of England coal should be the first thing to be brought into the house on New Year's Day.



The cock is part of folklore and tradition in many parts of the world: in both Asia and Europe the crowing of a cock was believed to drive away ghosts and demons: mosaic at Misis, Turkey

COCK

THE PROUD STRUTTING, aggressiveness and sexual ardour of the cock, together with its striking appearance and loud crowing, are the reasons for this bird's particularly widespread involvement in folk customs and traditions. It has retained its association with ancient lore, and has also tended to accumulate new beliefs and practices wherever it has been introduced.

The cock appeared in southern Europe in post-Homeric times, probably about the 5th or 6th century BC. Early in the 5th century a cock was depicted on a Sicilian coin. The Persian wars were fought during this period and there can be little doubt that the bird's introduction was due to this Asian incursion. The cock was sacred in Persia: to kill one of these birds was regarded as a sin, and its Persian name indicates that it was considered oracular. Aristophanes, in *The Birds*, called it 'the Persian bird' and compared its crest to the head-dress of the Persian king.

The Persians, in their turn, called the Carians, who came from a region in Asia Minor, 'cocks' because they wore crested helmets. A Greek writer compared the cock's adornments to the magnificent robes of Croesus, the proverbially wealthy king of Lydia. Pliny, too, commented on the remarkable comb. Because of the bird's pugnacity and courage, a cock was placed on the head of the statue of Athene on the Acropolis, as symbol of battle.

The crowing of the cock attracted special attention among the Greeks because it occurred about dawn, although the bird does, of course, crow at other times. There was a Greek story that when Mars chose to spend a night with Venus in the absence of her husband, Vulcan, he commissioned Alektraon (the Greek for 'cock') to watch at the door. He fell asleep and Mars, surprised by the returning husband, punished Alektraon by transforming him into a cock. He has been vigilant at dawn ever since.

Because evil spirits, 'the powers of darkness', have always been believed to be particularly active at night, the dawn crowing of the cock was usually a welcome sign, and the belief arose that the bird itself was effective in exorcizing evil. In the Persian sacred books it was stated that the cock's crow

awakens the dawn, arouses mankind to praise the perfect Holiness and drives away spectres and demons. This tradition persisted in Europe.

The belief arose that a bird that could frighten devils must be able to scare wild animals, and travellers in Libya carried a cock with them to frighten lions and basilisks. The basilisk was a fabulous monster, hatched by a serpent from a cock's egg, and alleged to be able to kill with a glance. The Greek writer Aelian, who died in about AD 222, remarked that the basilisk dies in convulsions on hearing the crowing of a cock. It is widely believed that a crowing hen is a sinister omen.

The Healing Bird

Another Greek author, Heliodorus, writing in the 3rd to 4th centuries AD, stated that the cock crows because of its affinity with the sun. The bird's solar connection dates from ancient times in Europe as well as in Asia, and we may assume that this association was introduced at the same time as the bird itself. The Greeks believed that the cock was sacred to Apollo, god of the sun, and it became associated with Asclepius, the god of healing, Apollo's son by the nymph Coronis. This was the outcome of its connection with the sun and the life-giving powers, and its opposition to the powers of

darkness. In the *Phaedo* Plato records Socrates's request before drinking the hemlock that a cock should be offered to Asclepius on his behalf, although this request was not connected with any desire to escape the effects of the poison.

The practice of sacrificing cocks has been widespread. Cocks were sacrificed to the sun in Mexico, and elsewhere served as ritual sacrifices after the erection of a building or bridge (probably instead of human victims). In the East a cock may be killed over an invalid's bed and the blood sprinkled on the sufferer. It was the custom in Ceylon for a red cock to be dedicated to a sick person and sacrificed if he recovered. In Scotland, the blood of a red cock was administered in a flour cake to the invalid.

There were places in Germany where it was believed that illness and bad luck could be warded off by hiding the head, heart and right foot of a cock in the house. In both Germany and Ireland a cock was sacrificed on 11 November, St Martin's Day (or Eve, in Ireland). In Athlone in Ireland the blood was sprinkled on the threshold and the four corners of the house. D'Arcy Thompson in *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (1936) states that he himself remembers a cock being sacrificed to St Nicholas to cure a sick cow.

Denial before Cock-Crow

The cock's symbolism is important in Christian traditions. Its crowing gained additional significance because of its role in St Peter's repudiation of Christ (Matthew, chapter 26), and it consequently became symbolic of the Christian's duty to remain alert against temptation and 'the wiles of the devil'. As such it became customary to place a weathercock on church towers and steeples. A tradition dating from the 4th century tells how the cock announced Christ's birth by calling out *Christus natus est*, 'Christ is born'.

Many ideas concerning good and bad luck involve the cock. American lore says if a cock crows on a porch visitors will come; if in the rain, the rain will stop. A cock crowing facing a house, at the front door, on a banister, or inside the house, is an omen of death. In Germany it was an ill omen if a wedding procession met cocks fighting while on its way to church.

Cock-fighting is an ancient amusement, popular in some eastern countries and all over Central and South America, and still carried on illegally in certain regions of Europe and the United States. As early as the 3rd century AD the Christian writer Lactantius had declared cock-fighting an unsuitable spectacle for Christian people, but the compassion for animals shown by many saints had little effect in encouraging humane treatment.

EDWARD A. ARMSTRONG



'Saviour of the World': the cock was a sacred bird in Persia and India, and this figure with a man's body and the head of the bird which daily saves the world from darkness was often found on amulets used by members of the Gnostic sects which flourished in western Asia and the eastern Mediterranean area: 18th century gilt statuette, Gerald Yorke collection



Cockle-Shell

Or scallop-shell, the heart-shaped shell worn in the hats of pilgrims to the shrine of St James of Compostela in Spain; the polished side of the shell was engraved with a drawing of the Virgin Mary or the Crucifixion, and the shell was blessed by a priest to protect the pilgrim from spiritual harm; hence Sir Walter Raleigh's famous lines, 'Give me my scallop-shell of quiet, my staff of peace to walk upon. . .'

Cockroach

Large beetle-like insect infesting many houses, dark-coloured and nocturnal, so acquiring supernatural attributions: in the Old American South, it was believed that a witch could be caught by leaving a jar in the hearth ashes overnight, and a cockroach found in the jar was the trapped witch. Folk medicine used cockroaches to treat urinary ailments, epilepsy and worms in children; United States lore suggests ridding your house of roaches forever by sweeping them out on Good Friday.

Giving up all entertainment was demanded of anyone who joined the Cokelers, a tiny 19th century Nonconformist sect which survives today

COKELERS

THE STRICT PURITANICAL sect of the Society of Dependants, or Cokelers as they were known popularly, was founded in 1850 and still has a small following today. It is exclusive to the West Sussex area and parts of south-west Surrey. The origin of the strange name Cokelers is not certain, although it has been suggested that it refers to the members' custom of drinking cocoa at their meetings, as part of the simple refreshments which were provided on these occasions. Another possible explanation is that it derived from a place called Cokkeg, in the village of Loxwood in Sussex, where the sect was formed.

The Cokelers were founded by a London shoemaker named John Sirgood, who was born at Avening, Gloucestershire, in 1820. As a young man, living in the Clapham area of South London, Sirgood became a member of a small sect named the Plumstead Peculiars, which had been founded by the evangelist William Bridges in 1838 (see PECULIAR PEOPLE).

At first Sirgood preached in Clapham, but he soon discovered that the further he journeyed from London the more genuine the response became. Closing his shop, he and his wife set out, with their belongings packed into a hand-cart, and walked into Surrey and West Sussex. They decided to settle in Loxwood, a small village about eight miles from Horsham. Here John Sirgood started to preach in the fields and behind the cottages. Informal prayer-meetings were held, and his fame as a preacher soon spread around the countryside. He was reputed to possess remarkable powers as a faith healer and even to have raised someone from the dead.

Forbidden Flowers

In 1850 Sirgood decided that the time had come to form his own sect. The principles which he prescribed for his followers were that they should lead a life of simple Puritan austerity. 'We believe that man must have a second birth,' he preached, 'he must realise Christ in his own life.' Those

who joined him were expected to renounce the world. They must accept that they had become possessed of part of the body of Christ and therefore free from sin; the sect was first known, in fact, as the 'Body'.

The demands which he made on his followers were rigid in the extreme. Villagers and labourers who had once enjoyed their ale in the local inn found that, once they had joined the Society of Dependants, they were expected to scorn all intoxicants and other pleasures. The Bible was their only literature, and whole passages had to be learned by heart and quoted in conversation. No flowers were allowed in the cottages, which had to be austere furnished, with the minimum of decoration. Entertainment and music were forbidden, and pictures and photographs were destroyed. Sport, literature, drama and most of the relaxations of the average man and woman were denied to the Dependants.

Furthermore, the Society did not advocate marriage. Anyone wishing to marry was at liberty to do so, but no marriage service could be solemnized by the followers of John Sirgood. They believed that marriage interfered with one's relationship with God, and that it was impossible for God to permit a marriage service in one of their chapels. This severe mortification of the flesh attracted many sincere, but often simple, followers and half the farm labourers in the district were soon Dependants.

As Sirgood's doctrine spread further afield, many new Dependant communities sprang up in neighbouring towns and villages, and the Cokelers still use their chapels today. Large provision shops were opened by the Society wherever a colony was formed and were owned by the members on cooperative lines. At Loxwood there still is a large store with a meeting-house, steam bakery and laundry, and with every kind of article for sale, from provisions to bicycles, haberdashery, kitchen utensils, gardening equipment and furniture. These shops have paid big dividends over the years, and only the ale houses have been the poorer for the coming of John Sirgood. For generations the Cokeler farmers have sold their produce to the Dependant dairies, and families in the various districts have invested their savings in the shops, with whom they have dealt exclusively.

John Sirgood's system meant that labourers in this part of the country have always been comparatively well-off and better dressed than those in other parts of Surrey and Sussex.

Joyful Funerals

But although the Cokelers prospered, they have not multiplied. Their doctrines were sterile and their membership dwindled, out of touch with the world beyond their little kingdom. In 1885, the year of Sirgood's death, membership in the district totalled 1,500. At the beginning of this century the members formed almost a third of the population of Wisborough and Northchapel, and there were many other villages under their influence. By 1904 there were only about 900 members regularly attending their chapels, dressed in black.

By the late 1960s the Cokeler membership was in what seemed to be terminal decline, with many stores and communal farms sold. Only a few meeting houses remained open, and only a minority of those who were nominally Cokelers, most of them middle-aged or elderly, attended the services held in them. Clearly the faith was unlikely to attract young people.

Something had to be done: the Cokelers could no longer survive in isolation from those with very similar beliefs, and after a series of negotiations they were re-united with the Peculiar People. While the Cokelers are no longer a separate denomination, something of their ethos survives in the meetings of the congregation of the united body – at, for instance, a funeral.

When John Sirgood was buried in the field behind the Loxwood chapel which he had built, the interment was attended by many hundreds of followers, farm hands and labourers. A Cokeler funeral was impressive and lasted for several hours. Death was not considered fearful, but regarded as a happy release from a world where there is much sin and misery. And something of this still survives.

The whole of a Cokeler's life is devoted to attempting to reduce sin and unhappiness to a minimum. The funeral, with its feasting and singing, is therefore more a celebration than an occasion for mourning. Instead of the usual gravestone, the Cokeler's grave is marked simply with a number on a metal plate.



COLERIDGE

THE MIND OF COLERIDGE (1772-1834) has been described as an ocean. This image is apt for many reasons – for its all-embracing scope, its profundity, unity, movement, and mystery. As the supreme literary critic not only of the Romantic movement and of his friend Wordsworth, but of English poetry in its entirety, Coleridge stands alone; his lectures on Shakespeare are unsurpassed in their kind. His *Aids to Reflection* remains a living contribution to Anglican and Protestant theology. Coleridge has been seen as an early Existentialist philosopher. He was a declared Platonist, and the names of two of his sons, Hartley and Berkeley,

declare his affinities in English philosophic thought. 'Every man', he wrote, 'is born an Aristotelian or a Platonist. I do not think it possible that anyone born an Aristotelian can become a Platonist; and I am sure no born Platonist can ever change into an Aristotelian. They are the two classes of man, beside which it is next to impossible to conceive a third. The one considers reason a quality, or attribute; the other considers it a power. I believe that Aristotle could never get to understand what Plato meant by an idea.'

As a young man Coleridge visited Germany in order to study the language and philosophy of Kant and Schelling, with whom he has many affinities. He was among the last minds to attempt that universality of

Illustration by J. Noel Paton to Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*: the belief that it is unlucky to shoot an albatross was largely invented by Coleridge

knowledge which characterizes Renaissance thinkers, but which has scarcely been possible since. 'I am, and ever have been, a great reader, and have read almost everything – a library cormorant. I am *deep* in all out-of-the-way books, whether of the monkish times, or of the puritanical era. I have read and digested most of the historical writers; but I do not *like* history. Metaphysics and poetry and "facts of mind", that is, accounts of all the strange phantoms that ever possessed "your philosophy"; dreamers, from Thoth the Egyptian to

'Taylor the English pagan, are my darling studies.' From childhood, when his father first showed him the starry sky, his mind had been 'habituated to the vast'. His favourite reading as a child was *The Arabian Nights*, for its marvels. A fine classical scholar, he read the Greek philosophers in the original.

In its immense scope, Coleridge's mind embraced all that European civilization had to offer. He corresponded with Humphry Davy on scientific subjects. At the same time he was one of the first to attempt that kind of introspective observation which has since laid the foundation of modern psychology. He held a very low opinion of Locke and the materialists; his own thought was given its unity and coherence by his unwavering view of man as a spiritual being.

For Coleridge, both as Christian and Platonist and as transcendentalist, mind is primary. As against Locke's view that nothing is in the mind that was not first in the senses, he considered Imagination to be 'the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles

to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.' This view of imagination differs in its dynamic character from Plato's more static presentation of the world of ideas.

Pleasure-Dome in Xanadu

It is well known that Coleridge wrote the poem *Kubla Khan* from the vivid recollection of an opium-dream. He was perhaps the first poet to draw upon the unconscious images of dream, uncensored by rational understanding and without reference to any theological or mythological system. 'Dreams with me are no Shadows, but the very Existences and foot-thick Calamities of my Life.' His immense learning, his knowledge of traditional mythology and its symbolism, is interwoven with archetypal dream-figures luminous with the aura of mystery which belongs to our dreams.

Coleridge insisted upon the distinction between Reason and Understanding; the former being an immediate perception, the latter the discursive faculty of the mind. 'Understanding is the Faculty of *Reflection*. Reason of Contemplation. Reason indeed is much nearer to SENSE than to Understanding; for Reason . . . is a direct aspect of Truth, an inward Beholding, having a similar relation to the Intelligible or Spiritual as SENSE has to the Material or Phenomenal.' He writes elsewhere, 'For to us, self-consciousness is not a kind of *being*, but a kind of *knowing*, and that too the highest that exists in us.' In the *sum*, or I AM, 'object

and subject, being and knowing are identical, each involving and supposing the other.'

Coleridge never completed the great work for which he felt, to the end of his life, that all his writings and studies had been only a preparation. His thought is to be discovered throughout his letters, note-books, lecture-notes and table-talk recorded by his friends and the hearers of his inimitable extempore lectures on literature; and in the political and literary journalism to which he devoted so much time and energy; to the detriment, it may be, of his incomparable poetic genius. It is impossible to dip into Coleridge anywhere without discovering some rich treasure; and yet the whole is greater than the parts, for perhaps no other man has ever left such a record of all that passed through his mind and senses.

His profound intellect notwithstanding, Coleridge was a man of deep feeling, capable of great love and great suffering. If knowledge be a fourfold experience, as Jung has explained, embracing intellection, feeling, sensation and intuition, Coleridge was, in this respect also, a complete man to a degree seldom achieved. 'My opinion is this,' he wrote, 'that deep thinking is attainable only by a man of deep feeling, and that all truth is a species of revelation. The more I understand Sir Isaac Newton's works, the more boldly I dare utter to my own mind . . . that I believe the souls of five hundred Sir Isaac Newtons would go to the making up of a Shakespeare or a Milton.'

KATHLEEN RAINE

COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS

THE THEORY of the collective unconscious was C.G. Jung's response to the fact that the same patterns, themes and images tend to appear and reappear in human ways of thinking all over the world and all through the past and present – notably in myths, legends, folk tales and religious and artistic symbolism. They are drawn from the fundamental well of ideas which, he at first believed, was created by the experiences of the human race since far back in its earliest days, housing patterns of behaviour and ideas inherited from all past generations.

Jung first put forward the idea of the collective unconscious, though not the term itself, in a book published in 1911 (now in English as *Symbols of Transformation*). He had been impressed by the recurrence of the same motifs and patterns, the 'universal parallelism' as he described it, in human ways of thinking generally and in the dreams and fantasies of his patients. Deep in our make-up, he deduced, are ingrained propensities or dispositions which govern the contents of the conscious mind, but are not peculiar to any one person's psyche. They are manifest in everyone and predis-



The ominous, sinister Shadow: detail from Hans Baldung Grien's painting, *Eve, the Serpent and Death*

pose us to approach life, interpret it and organize it in certain ways.

Jung called these 'primordial images', but he was not happy with the phrase. He also tried 'inherited pathways' or 'deposits' to get nearer what he meant, but he decided that the images were not inherited, generation by generation, but were responses to the basic human experience of life and its fundamental rhythms, which remain the same everywhere, throughout history.

In 1919 Jung used the word 'archetype' for the first time (in *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*). From Greek and literally meaning 'first mould', the archetype is the original document from which copies are made, or the producer behind the scenes of a stage show. Jung's archetypes cannot be examined directly, for by definition they lie in the realm of the unconscious, but can be apprehended only as they manifest themselves in the conscious mind. They include for instance the Wise Old Man, the powerful and benevolent father figure who appears in religions as the chief of the gods; and the corresponding female figure of the Great Mother, in everyday life the ideal mother of the family.

Others are the Hero and the Trickster, the Anima and the Animus – which are respectively the feminine and masculine components in the psychological make-up of the opposite sex, and which Jung equated with the soul. The Anima, which often appears in mythology as a helpful female figure, a guide or inspirer, is closely connected with a man's relationship with his

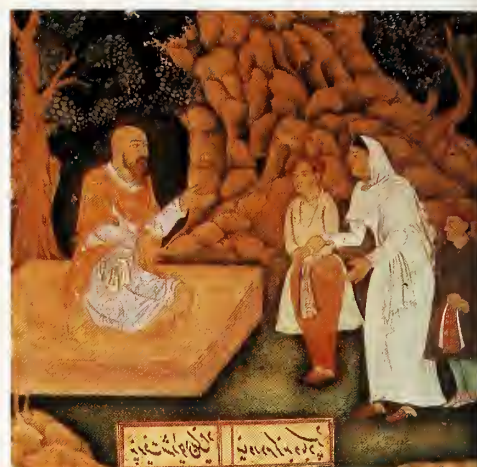
mother and influences masculine responses to and relationships with women. The Animus, correspondingly connected with a woman's relationship with her father, is the latent masculinity which Jung believed exists in all women.

The Shadow Side

Again, there is the Persona, the self which we display to other people and which is strongly influenced in its composition in youth by the expectations of parents, teachers and friends. Opposed to it is the ominous, sinister Shadow, which represents the unacknowledged aspects of the self and the individual's potential for evil. Jung diagnosed the emergence of the Nazi Party in 1930s Germany as a collective manifestation of the Shadow.

In *Psychology and Alchemy* Jung wrote: 'It must be admitted that the archetypal contents of the collective unconscious can often assume grotesque and horrible forms in dreams and fantasies, so that even the most hard-boiled rationalist is not immune from shattering nightmares and haunting fears. The psychological elucidation of these images leads logically into the depths of religious phenomenology. The history of religion in its widest sense (including therefore mythology, folklore and primitive psychology) is a treasure-house of archetypal forms from which the doctor can draw helpful parallels and enlightening comparisons for the purpose of calming and clarifying a consciousness that is all at sea.'

It was Jung's realisation that the arche-



The Wise Old Man: detail from a Mughal miniature, Bodleian Library

types exist across culture frontiers that led him to the idea of the collective unconscious, and he came to think that the archetypes lie behind not only religion and mythology, but behind science, philosophy and all human ideas and behaviour. Each human being contains from the beginning the fundamental unconscious patterns of human functioning, and the psychotherapist's task is to help them realise fully the potential within. (See also DREAMS; JUNG).

FURTHER READING: A. Stevens, *On Jung* (Routledge, Chapman and Hall, New York, 1990) with full bibliography.



COLOURS

THE RUSSIAN PAINTER Vasily Kandinsky one of the founders of the modern movement in art, believed that colours have 'a corresponding spiritual vibration' and that 'colour harmony must rest only on a corresponding vibration in the human soul'. The experiments conducted by B. J. Kouwer and reported in his book *Colours and Their Character* (1949) suggest that people react to colours in ways which match their traditional significance, whether because each colour has some innate quality of its own or because of the association of similar ideas with them for centuries.

The traditions are embedded deep in myth. The Aztecs spoke of four main colours – red, yellow, white and black – which were also the four main types of corn, the four cardinal directions, and the gods associated with them. The Pueblo Indians, Cherokee and other American tribes also assign special colours and myth qualities to the four directions.

A colour's meaning may vary considerably in different parts of the world. Black is generally the colour of mourning in Europe but in China mourners wear white. Even in Europe, the ideas associated with

Druids at the investiture of the Prince of Wales in 1969, wearing robes of colours which indicate their rank: white for the chief Druids, green for the bards, and blue for recent initiates

a colour vary. Black is the hue of death but the typical flower of death is the white lily, and white birds are usually considered ominous, because of their rarity. But broadly speaking, there is a rough general agreement in the European tradition on the significance of the principal colours.

Black is naturally linked with night and darkness, and by extension with death, the night that ends a man's days, with mourning and sorrow, and with evil, the Devil and the 'powers of darkness'. Black magic is evil magic, a black day is one of disaster, a black sheep is the one that goes astray, the black flag marks the pirate, the lawless rebel, and the arch-rebel himself, the Devil, frequently appeared to witches as a black animal, or as a 'black' (dark-complexioned) man, often in black clothes.

Black is also the colour of the earth, in which the dead lie buried. In Greece and Rome black animals were connected with the earth goddess, the powers below and the ghosts of the dead in the underworld.

Standing for both death and earth, in alchemy black means death and putrefaction but also germination, new life burgeoning in the depths. Renewed life comes to the surface in the 'white' stage of the alchemical work (see **ALCHEMY**).

The contrast of black and white is fundamental to European colour symbolism. In churches the black trappings of Good Friday are replaced on Easter Sunday by white for Christ's resurrection. Black and white knights do battle in legends and also on chessboards. Where the Devil and his legions are black, the angels and the righteous wear white in heaven.

White means cleanliness, and therefore purity and innocence. A bride wears white for purity. White magic is good magic. The sacred horses of the Greek, Roman, Celtic and Germanic peoples were white. White is the moonlight that shines in the blackness of night, and so it may stand for inspiration and insight, light in the darkness of the mind. Black is ruthless, as in the black shirts of Fascists, white is meek, or sometimes even cowardly, the white feather and the white flag.

Red For Danger

Red is pre-eminently the colour of blood, and the words for 'red' in English, French, German and Latin all stem from a root which probably meant 'blood'. As a result red means physical life and energy, and in prehistoric burials the body was often sprinkled with red ochre, apparently to give the corpse life in the underworld. In American superstition, red occurs in many folk cures: a red silk handkerchief for neuralgia, red yarn around the thumb to stop a nosebleed. But red also means bloodshed, and is the colour of the planet and war god Mars. When a victorious general rode in triumph through the streets of Rome, his

Above Buddhist monks at a theological college in Bangkok. In the East saffron robes, varying in shade from yellow to orange or red, are a symbol of spiritual greatness **Below** Spanish Cardinals wearing red vestments, in the Christian Church a symbol of divine love



Popperfoto Ltd

Luis Arenas

The Colours of the Great Work

Great significance was attached to the colours developed during alchemical processes and represented in a symbolic fresco by Nicholas Flamel (1330-1418):

The figure of a man, like that of Saint Paul, clothed with a robe white and yellow, bordered with gold, holding a naked Sword, having at his feet a man on his knees, clad in a robe of orange colour, blacke and white...Upon a green field...two men and one woman, altogether white: Two Angels beneath, and over the Angels the figure of our Saviour coming to judge the world, clothed with a robe which is perfectly Citrine white...The figure of a man like unto Saint Peter, clothed in a robe Citrine red, holding a key in his right hand, and laying his left hand upon a woman, in an orange coloured robe, which is on her knees at his feet...

Eiranaeus Orandus
Nicholas Flammel

face was painted red. In Irish legend, the fiercest of all warriors were the Red Branch, the guards of Conchobar mac Nessa, King of Ulster in the 1st century AD. In a wider sense, red means violence in general, danger (as in traffic lights) and all fierce and passionate emotions, including revolutionary enthusiasm and lust, the red flag of Communism and the red light that marks the brothel. In 17th-century New England, adulteresses were made to wear a scarlet 'A' in proclamation of their sin – a fact famously made use of by Nathaniel Hawthorne in his book *The Scarlet Letter*. Kowser found that the ideas people principally associate with red are passion, emotion, temperament, action, mutinousness, force, sexuality.

Green is the colour of vegetation, and our words 'green', 'grass' and 'grow' all come from the same root. Green is the peaceful bounty of Nature and most people find it a soothing and restful colour: it has been extensively used in the decoration of hospital premises.

Its connection with fertility is represented by the Green George of Slav countries, a young man covered from head to foot in branches and flowers, the centre of a joyful procession in April, or the Jack o' the Green in England, wearing green boughs and ivy on May Day.

For much the same reason, green also is the colour of Venus, who represents fertility and growth; and it is the colour generally associated with those surviving descendants of the old pagan earth elementals, the pixies and leprechauns.

But green has also become, not only the symbol of the power of creation, but of the destructive influence of envy. It is regarded as an unlucky colour to wear, and the sign of a woman who is unable to find someone to marry.

The symbolism of blue is also complicated. It is the colour of the unclouded sky, and so



A colour's meaning varies considerably in different parts of the world. In the West the colour of death and mourning is black (above) but in China mourners wear white (below)

the blue in the United States flag means vigilance (the white is for purity and the red for courage). It is linked with supreme gods ruling from the sky – it is the colour of Jupiter – and perhaps as a result with aristocracy and conservatism, blue blood and true-blue – although in revolutionary France and Russia white was the symbol of the old order.

The Virgin Mary's robe is usually blue, no doubt because of her role as the queen of heaven. On the other hand, blue is also frequently connected with the sea and water,

with tears and sadness, 'the blues', and with the murky depths of pornography, as in blue films.

Yellow is also ambivalent. As the colour of the sun and gold, it means perfection, wealth, glory, power. But yellow can also symbolise jealousy and hatred, cowardice and treachery: in early times saffron-yellow vestments were worn in churches on Good Friday, as a reminder of the Jews' vindictiveness in crucifying Christ, and Judas the betrayer was given reddish-yellow hair in medieval paintings. In more recent times, too, yellow was the colour of the Star of David which Jews were forced to wear under Nazi German rule. (See also CORRESPONDENCES; GREEN; RED; WHITE.)

